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THE LETTERS OF MARTIN LUTHER



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TORONTO

THE LETTERS
OF
MARTIN LUTHER

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED

BY

MARGARET A. CURRIE

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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PREFACE

I

ABOUT a hundred years ago Coleridge wrote : " I can scarcely conceive a more delightful volume than might be made from Luther's letters, especially those from the Wartburg, if translated in the simple, idiomatic, hearty mother-tongue of the original." One's first impulse on reading those words is to search for this "delightful volume," but, though nearly a century has elapsed since Coleridge thus wrote, no such volume is to be found in present-day German, even in Germany. This treasure ought to be accessible to all classes. The reason why all classes have not had access to Luther's letters long ago is, that they have lain embedded, many of them in Latin, in the volumes of De Wette ; also in Old German, in the twenty-four huge volumes of Walch's edition of Luther's Works, published about 170 years ago ; and in the three volumes of Dr. Gottfried Schütze's German edition of Luther's hitherto unpublished letters, translated from the Latin in 1784.

From the two latter sources De Wette culled most of the 2,324 letters published in 1826, in his first five volumes, which he dedicated to the Grand Duke Karl August, of Saxe-Weimar, Goethe's friend, in grateful remembrance of the services rendered by the princes of the Saxon Ernestine line to the Reformation, and of the use

he had been permitted to make of the treasures in the Grand Ducal library in Weimar. De Wette gives the literary history of every letter, thus making them a *Tagebuch* of Luther's life.

In the Preface to Dr. Schütze's German edition of Luther's letters the translator says: "From different quarters a wish has been expressed to see Dr. Schütze's unprinted letters in the hands of the German public, and I did not know how one could become better acquainted with the character of this Paul-like man than from his letters, in which his heart lies exposed, and which bring us so much in contact with the spirit of the Reformation; and if, at times, they verge on vehemence, yet they never leave the reader unedified." The Latin edition is dedicated to Frederick V. of Denmark. In the Preface to Stroebel's Selected Letters—Nürnberg, 1780—the author says: "The more of Luther's letters I read, my respect for this wonderful man always increased, and most of them gave me such pleasure that I believed I would be conferring a favour on many of his admirers, especially among the laity, to whom his voluminous works were scarcely accessible, if I made them better acquainted with his noble and honest heart, thus inspiring his ungrateful children with more respect for him to whom they owe so much, and who, in every relation of life, appears as noble as he was amiable, although many who never read his works assert the opposite."

Dr. Enders, in his splendid collection of Luther's "Briefwechsel," mostly in Latin—the first volume was published in 1884, and the tenth in 1903—says that they are intended not only for the learned, but for a larger public who are interested in all Luther's letters. Dr. Enders derives most of those letters from De Wette, Walch, Aurifaber, Schütze, and Stroebel.

Luther was the first classic writer of the German

language, and his words, as Richter says, were half-battles; while according to Coleridge, his "miraculous and providential translation of the Bible was the fundamental act of the construction of literary German."

This busiest of men was the most indefatigable of letter-writers; and in his letters all the events of those stormy times are mirrored, as well as the influences which developed his own religious life. His letters are specially valuable because of his allusions to his herculean labours in the field of Bible translation.

But his love for the Scriptures lightened the task. Referring specially to the Psalms, which occupied him so continuously through life, Luther said: "The Holy Scriptures were to believing souls what the meadow is to the animal, what the home is to man, the nest to the bird, the cleft of the rock to the sea-fowl, the stream to the fish."

Busch, in prefacing Bismarck's Life, claims for his hero a hundred years hence a place alongside of Luther, and asks who would not now be glad to have fuller details of the Reformer in the great days and hours of his life? His letters abundantly supply these details, while at the same time they throw light on many a disputed point of Reformation history.

In Luther's lifetime collections of his letters began to appear. The first, in 1530, contained four letters. In 1546 Cruciger issued eight letters of consolation, and gradually these were increased. In 1556, Aurifaber, in Jena, with the Elector John Frederick, meditated issuing 2000.

One is struck, in reading Luther's letters, by the great love which bound that Wittenberg circle together, extending to far-away Nürnberg, the home of Pirkheimer, Albrecht Dürer, Spengler, Link, and Osiander—to Strassburg, where Capito, Bucer, and Matthew Zell, with his

wife Katherine, that succourer of many, laboured ; and Luther is interested in all that concerns each.

In Hering's *Die Mystik Luthers*, we see the fresh interest which entered Luther's life through Tauler's writings. His own dark hours had been a puzzle to him long before he made the acquaintance of the Mystics. "The just shall live by faith" had been his first comforter, but Tauler was his first human comforter. "Although unknown in the schools of theology, and therefore despised," Luther writes, "yet I have found more pure theology in his book than in all the scholastic teachers in all the universities put together." Finding an old book containing an outline of Tauler's theology, he edited it ; and a peculiar interest attaches to it, as the issue of *Deutsche Theologie* (*Theologia Germanica*) in 1516 was Luther's first appearance in print.

Another great joy to him was the accession of the Anhalt Princes to the Reformed faith. These three brothers were his warm friends ; and he sent them Nicolas Hausmann as their Court preacher. Max Müller says that in every crisis in their country's history the Anhalt Princes came to the front.

With Luther "out of sight was not out of mind." When his good Elector had him carried off to the Wartburg, after his grand appearance at Worms in 1521, he at once began writing to his anxious friends in Wittenberg. On May 12 he wrote to Melanchthon, Amsdorf, and Agricola. He surveys with deep pain the general state of the Church, and reproaches himself for not shedding tears over her wretched condition in the presence of Anti-christ. He admonishes Melanchthon to defend the walls of Jerusalem with the gifts God had given him ; and he would aid him through his prayers. He asks anxiously who is filling the pulpit where he was wont to preach ; and, along with these weighty matters, he does not forget

his friend Agricola's domestic concerns, sending two golden gulden—one to the baby, another to buy wine for his wife.

And his friends must send him his papers at once, so that he may resume his work, since not a moment could Junker Georg¹ lose in his seclusion except through frequent headaches; for, even when following the chase, he spiritualised what he saw in the hunting-field. And when he left his "Patmos" he took with him his gift to the German people, the New Testament, in their mother-tongue.

Coleridge speaks of the great interest of the Wartburg letters; but those from Coburg Castle are not a whit less interesting, especially those to Melanchthon, dated from the "Castle so full of evil spirits," in which he endeavours to encourage his friend. "The six months spent here," says a recent German writer, "might be called the mid-hour of his life. He is no longer the monk who sighs over his sins, nor the embarrassed peasant's son, who, dazzled by the august assembly at Worms, begs for a day's grace before answering for himself. He has been made strong by inward and outward storms which, however, were powerless to rob him of his childlike innocence of heart and poetic freshness of feeling; for he knows that the wondrous Christian experience with which God has honoured him is now the common property of hundreds of thousands. Hence he got through an amount of work which fills us with astonishment; for, while holding in his hands the threads which set all the Evangelical princes and theologians in motion in Augsburg, he had leisure to be professor to his students, *Veit Dietrich*, etc., *seelsorger* for those in affliction, bookmaker for his dear Germans, and the most loving of sons, husbands, and fathers."²

¹ The name Luther assumed while in the Wartburg.

² *Luther in Coburg Castle.*

On his arrival he wrote above the door of his room, "I shall not die, but live," from his beloved 118th Psalm. Till his books arrived, he at once began writing to his friends, and in his first letter says: "We have reached our Sinai, which I shall turn into a Zion, and build three tabernacles—one to the Psalter, one to the Prophets, and one to Æsop." Luther intended reconstructing and purifying Æsop's Fables. "For where can one, outside the Bible, find a finer book of old world wisdom, from which so much instruction and warning how to act in everyday life towards all can be found?" asks Luther.

Matthesius, in lecturing on Luther, quotes Jotham's fable of the trees wishing to appoint a king over them as a proof that the fable had not its origin in Phrygia or Greece, but was known to the Jews 3000 years before Christ. "What," he asks, "if Asaph, the writer of so many beautiful psalms, was the first to collect these fables, even as others did the Proverbs of Solomon; for the two names, Æsop and Asaph, exactly correspond." Strange to say, Luther's MS. of Æsop now lies, without the beautiful Preface, in the Vatican library in Rome. This fragment is upon ten sheets of strong paper, along with the four letters.

But graver studies interrupted this pastime, although Æsop often formed the subject of his table-talk. "His Popish adversaries did not disturb him greatly then. The weal of Christendom, which was threatened by the Turks, lay much nearer his heart. In the preceding year Turkey's tents were ranged before Vienna's gates, so that the dome of St. Stephen's ran a narrow chance of having her cross replaced by the crescent. Different Christian states looked with no unfriendly eye at the Porte's success, and so it is all the more touching to see how nobly the German Reformer almost forgot the dangers which assailed his own cause in

his anxiety for a common Christianity—one would almost say humanity.”¹

Luther's attitude towards Charles V. also showed his toleration. When the Emperor forbade Evangelical preaching during the Diet of Augsburg, Luther said: “The town belongs to him, so we must give way;” but happily the princes would not yield. Luther had always a great affection for the young Emperor. “He is pious and peaceable,” he said, “and does not speak as much in a year as I do in one day.”

June 25 was a proud day for Luther, when the Augsburg Confession was read at the Diet. Although drawn out by Melancthon, it is doubtful if it would ever have been finished had Luther's powerful letters not restored his fainting powers. “God,” he writes, “has placed you in a spot, which is neither to be found in your rhetoric nor your philosophy; and this spot is called faith, where all you cannot see nor comprehend is to be found.”

The precious words of consolation which Luther scattered across his path came from a heart assailed by many a storm, for he knew his moments of weak faith came direct from Satan. It was in Coburg that he wrote that letter to his son Hans which has delighted the children of every age.

When there his father died, and he wrote commending his sick father to Him who loved him better than he did, comforting him with the thought of “the exit from this world to God being shorter than the journey from Wittenberg to Mansfeld, for it only means an hour's sleep.” Just then his wife sent him the picture of his little Lena. At first he could not make out who it was, but gradually recognised it, and thought it an excellent likeness. And as a husband Luther was no less loving. When once the

¹ *Luther in Coburg Castle.*

careful wife asked him to procure something for her, the busy man sent to Nürnberg for oranges, there being none in Wittenberg, for "why should he not be glad to do her bidding, for was she not dearer to him than the King of France or Venice?"

Particularly beautiful is Luther's letter to Chancellor Brück, speaking of the stars in God's beautiful firmament being supported by no visible pillars. Luther's solitude was cheered by a visit from his future Elector, John Frederick, who gave him a gold ring, and asked him to accompany him home. But we shall anticipate no more of Luther's letters, except to say how touching are his allusions to his being "a feeble, worn-out old man, overburdened with letter-writing, overwhelmed with work," as his life draws near to its close.

II

We shall give a few details of his numerous correspondents, for it would fill volumes to tell all that is interesting of these distinguished men. We shall not enter into his relations with his three Electors, those remarkable men, the first of whom founded Wittenberg University in 1502, to which Luther was called in 1508 through Staupitz, often called his spiritual father. Little did the good Frederick, with his great love of peace, dream that this modest High School, which was not to presume to vie with its accomplished sisters, Erfurt and Leipsic, and whose teachers were to be the monks in the Augustinian cloister, would one day set Germany ablaze and shake the Papal throne. Frederick never met Luther, wishing to remain unbiassed on the great religious questions agitating the Empire. The second, John the Steadfast, was his warm friend; while the third, John Frederick, was his son in the faith, who, after Luther's

death, went into exile, accompanied by Lukas Cranach, for the gospel's sake.

Luther numbered kings and queens, princes and princesses, popes, painters, such as Albrecht Dürer, poets like Coban Hesse, and warriors, as well as eminent humanists and theologians, among his correspondents; and he was as much interested in the smallest affairs of the smallest people as in the fate of empires.

Melanchthon ranks first among Luther's friends. Emil Frommel writes: "Even as our Saviour sent out His disciples two and two, so has He ever done in later ages. The son of the miner and that of the smith stand close together in God's kingdom. The one fetches the iron and coal out of the earth, the other polishes the weapons for warfare. Melanchthon was the great linguist of the Reformation. Luther glories in the ancient languages being the sheath in which the Word of God was hidden."

No one rejoiced in his great success as a lecturer more than Luther. "Perhaps I am Philip's forerunner," he writes, "the Elias to prepare the way for a greater, who will throw the servants of Israel and Ahab into confusion." Melanchthon said: "I would rather die than separate from Luther." When almost dead at Weimar in 1540 it was Luther's prayers that raised him up. On February 19, 1546, Melanchthon, bathed in tears, announced Luther's death to the students: "And now," he cried, "we are like the forsaken orphans of a beloved father."

Spalatin may perhaps rank next in the portrait gallery of Luther's friends. They were of the same age, and studied in Erfurt together. Spalatin was Court chaplain to Frederick the Wise, and eventually preacher in Altenburg. Of the 2,324 letters in De Wette, 415 were to Spalatin. More letters were therefore written to him than to any other, for Luther told him everything. Spalatin, though

gifted with greater natural talents and a more finished education, had less insight and self-reliance than Luther, and was therefore glad to follow his guidance. As he sat in the Council of Princes between Frederick and Luther, and understood both men, it is difficult to overestimate his services to the Reformation. Spalatin died in 1545.

Justus Jonas may be placed next. He was born in 1593. He took his doctor's degree in Erfurt, then studied law in Wittenberg, and was professor and provost there. Jonas translated and defended Luther's Ninety-five Theses. This was his first service to the Reformation. Jonas was an eloquent preacher, and on Sabbaths and Fast-days preached in the Stift's and Schloss churches. "What learning Wittenberg contains, Erfurt is frosty in comparison," he wrote to Coban Hesse. Jonas was at the head of the second Visitation; and in 1533 presided over the creation of the first Evangelical doctors, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, etc., at which the Elector John Frederick, with his wife Sibylla, our Anne of Cleve's sister, were present. Later Jonas became superintendent in Halle. It was in Jonas's church (in whose arms Luther may be said to have died) that Luther's body lay over the Sabbath on the way from Eisleben. When announcing his death to the Elector, Jonas begged him to write a letter of consolation to Bugenhagen, for a great love bound all of them together. Melancthon said: "Bugenhagen is a grammatiker, I am a dialectician, Jonas is an orator, only Luther surpasses us all." After Luther's death Jonas was exiled, and died at Eislefeld, 1555.

Bugenhagen comes next. Born 1485, he studied in Greifswald, and was won to the truth by Luther's *Babylonian Captivity*, and came to Wittenberg in 1521 to be near his master. He became pastor of the Stadt Kirche, where Luther often preached for him when he was absent

on the Visitations. Bugenhagen had the gift of church organisation, and introduced the Reformation into Hamburg, Lubeck, Pomerania, and Denmark, where in 1537 he crowned King Christian IV. and his Queen, like a true bishop, as Luther wrote.

Next in order is the good pastor of Joachimsthal, Johann Matthesius, who was born in 1504, and boarded for years with Luther, where he was received into the circle of his dearest friends. In 1526 he became acquainted with Luther's pamphlet on *Good Works*, "from which," he says, "I learned the elements of Christianity." Matthesius wrote the first complete and reliable life of Luther, a series of Sabbath evening lectures to his Bible class in 1562-64, one of the most charming books of Reformation times. In Lecture VII. Matthesius gives an interesting account of his first sojourn in Wittenberg, which was cut short in 1529 by the Marburg Conference. Although placed in a remote parish he knew all that was going on ; for, he had friends in the great Reformation centres, Nürnberg, Strassburg, Regensburg, and even in Vienna. Melancthon often wrote asking him for news, for letters were then the newspapers. One may gather that Matthesius was a person of note ; for, over a hundred portraits of him still exist, two in the National Gallery in London. Matthesius died on October 8, 1565.

Friedrich Myconius, the beloved Mecum of Luther's letters, eventually first Evangelical superintendent in Gotha, was born in 1591 at Lichtenfels. His spiritual experience as a monk closely resembled Luther's in Erfurt. In 1546 he related, as fresh as if it had happened the day before, how the way of salvation had been so far revealed to him in the now famous dream of July 14, 1510, on his first night in the Franciscan cloister in Annaberg, which he entered solely to serve God perfectly. But 1517 dawned before peace visited his soul. Little did the pious monk know,

while groping after the light all these years, that another youth had already found the pearl of great price in the Augustinian cloister at Erfurt, and was to be the means of imparting it to multitudes. In 1518 the news that Luther was to sleep in the Barefoot cloister penetrated to Myconius's cell in Weimar, but although under the same roof with him the poor priest was not to see him. Could he only have known how often he was to stand by Luther in days to come it might have stilled his aching heart. Myconius was at the Reformer's bedside, along with his Elector, when Luther lay at death's door in Schmalkalden, and, with Bugenhagen and Spalatin, accompanied him to Tambach, his "Peniel."

In 1539 Myconius was in London arranging religious matters by invitation of Henry VIII., who received the deputation warmly. But as months passed, the King's courtiers warned the Embassy of the King's duplicity, so negotiations were broken off. It was Luther's beautiful letter of consolation to Myconius, when he was at the gates of death, that was the means of raising him up. He survived Luther a few months.

Von Amsdorf, Professor in Wittenberg, and later Bishop of Naumburg, one of Luther's most intimate friends, was the same age as Luther. He, with Caspar Cruciger, was the richest of the Reformers, the latter having a large house in Wittenberg and iron-works in Joachimsthal. Jonas once said at Luther's table: "God be praised that pious theologians can also become rich!" "Ah!" cried Luther, "we would all be rich enough in the riches of Christ, but, alas, we prize an earthly treasure more."

Cruciger was professor in Wittenberg and preacher in the Schloss Kirche, and stood very close to Luther. He was the stenograph of the Reformation, writing many of Luther's sermons. Often when Luther was ill and the

others away on the Visitations and at Diets, Cruciger was the only theologian in the town. In 1533 he was rector of the University for six months. Luther loved him for his learning, piety, and modesty. Cruciger was also the most versatile of the Reformers. He was always delicate, and died after an illness of three months in 1548. The day before he died Cruciger finished Luther's *Last Words of David*. Cruciger's daughter married Luther's son Johannes.

Two of Luther's lifelong friends were Link, with whom he was at school in Magdeburg, and John Lange, Luther's fellow-student in Erfurt. In Lange's church in Erfurt, still standing, the first Evangelical sermon was preached. Some of Luther's most interesting letters in 1516-17 are to Lange, in one of which he says that he is cloister preacher, inspector of Leitzkau fish-pond, daily lecturer in parish church, eleven times prior, expounder of St. Paul, lecturer on the Psalms, besides having most of his time taken up with letter-writing. But one has only to peruse Luther's letters in order to see the number of his correspondents. He numbered Albrecht Dürer and Erasmus, that monarch in the realm of letters, among them.

III

In Luther's letters the Reformer too is to be seen in all his moods ; for, it has been truly said that Luther's heart is seen in his letters, which he did not dream would see the light of day, while his talents may be seen from his other works. But these letters do not hide his faults, as those to Herzog George, of whom he said he would enter Leipzig if it rained Herzog Georges nine days running, and to the Archbishop Albrecht of Mayence, the prime mover in the Indulgences, also to Charles V., testify, but these all belong to history.

It is interesting to note that Luther's unalterable opinion of the Turk coincides with that of the Sultan's greatest foes in this twentieth century, and then, as now, His Sultanic Majesty tried to propitiate his distinguished foe, but with less success than he often meets with in this enlightened age.

From these letters may also be seen the two greatest blots on Luther's career : the part he took in the peasant insurrection and in the Landgrave Philip's double marriage. But Luther's immense respect for constitutional authority, and his horror of insubordination, may partly explain the former, while the personal influence of his much loved Prince, who stood by him both at Worms and in the Augsburg days, may account for the latter ; but both errors bore bitter fruit in days to come.

Luther's great breadth of view regarding ritual, vestments, etc., must interest many in the present day. But it will astonish them to see how immaterial he considered pictures, and candles burning on the altar, when compared with the pure preaching of the Word. The only advantage which he saw in these things was that they might arrest the attention of the illiterate, the weak-minded, and children, till their knowledge of Divine things increased.

The Swiss divines, when in Wittenberg in 1536, were horrified at these relics of Popery, and it required all Bugenhagen's assurances that no one now worshipped any picture, to pacify Bucer and Capito, who, like our own John Knox, put away everything tainted with Popery, while Luther retained all not expressly forbidden in the Bible.

IV

Before closing, the translator must acknowledge the debt due to the marvellous facilities afforded by those

splendid continental libraries, the Koenigliche in Berlin, the Grand Ducal in Weimar, and the Johanneum in Hamburg, where even a stranger, by finding a guarantor, may take home an armful of volumes for a month ; also for permission to consult Walch and De Wette in the Glasgow University Library.

The translator would never have presumed to undertake what has proved an even more arduous task than she expected had there been a collection of Luther's letters in English. There is no such collection. The small volume of his *Letters to Women* is all that exists. The reader's kind indulgence is therefore claimed for all shortcomings.

In the selection of the letters, those referred to in Koestlin's *Life and Works of Luther* and in the lives of many of his friends were used ; also an excellent collection of ninety-one letters by Dr. Buchwald published in 1898 was consulted, as well as Dr. Theodore Kolde's excellent *Life of Luther*, published 1884, from which letters for insertion were selected.

Of course the text-book all through has been De Wette. The letters have been rendered into the simplest English, as more in accordance with the original, and with Luther's ideas in general. The following anecdote may show the reason for such rendering :—Complimenting Bucer when in Wittenberg in 1536 on his fine sermon, Luther said : "And yet I am a better preacher than you !" As Bucer cordially admitted this, Luther explained : "I did not mean it so, for I know my weakness, and could not preach so learnedly, but when I enter the pulpit, and see my audience before me, mostly ignorant peasants and Wends, I preach to them even as a mother feeds her babes with milk." "And thus," says Koestlin, "even in jest did Luther characterise his own preaching." A few very long letters had to be shortened

to include some interesting ones which might otherwise have been excluded. De Wette's plan to make Luther's letters an autobiography of his life has been so far followed in this collection. De Wette's headings, with any interesting event bearing on the contents of the letter, are given in a head note. This has been done with a view to save the reader needless trouble, for even many highly educated people know little more of Luther's career than can be gathered from visiting Eisleben, Eisenach, Erfurt, Wittenberg, Worms, and Augsburg.

Should these letters throw new light upon the life of the great Reformer and the Reformation, or impart a fresh interest to a future foreign tour, or cast a halo over less known haunts of the Reformer, such as Coburg, Weimar, Gotha, Jena, Schmalkalden, Möhra, Tambach, Grimma, Dessau, and Halle, so rich in memories of Luther and his friends, then they have not been translated in vain ; for, to Luther as much as to his spiritual guide, Tauler, do Goethe's words apply—

The ground is hallowed where the good man treads.
When centuries have rolled, his sons shall hear
The deathless echo of his words and deeds.

M. A. C.

GLASGOW.

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TO JOHN BRAUN, VICAR IN EISENACH

The first extant letter of Luther. He invites Braun to come to his ordination as priest in Erfurt.

April 22, 1507.

To the saintly and Right Reverend Priest in Christ, John Braun, vicar in Eisenach, my beloved friend in Christ, grace and peace in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I would be afraid, best of friends, to trouble you with my letters and requests, did I not know from the many benefits you have showered upon me how kindly you feel towards me. Therefore I have no hesitation in addressing you, confident that our mutual friendship will secure the favourable consideration of these lines.

For seeing the holy God has, of His manifold goodness, so highly exalted me, an unworthy sinner, and deemed me worthy to enter His service, then I must be grateful, and try, as far as I can, to fulfil the duties entrusted to me.

My father has arranged that, with God's help, I shall be consecrated to the office of the priesthood on Sabbath four weeks.

The day has been fixed to suit my father. Perhaps I may be presuming too much on your love, when I humbly beg for your presence also. I do not ask you to make this troublesome journey because of any services I may have rendered you, for I know of none, but because I experienced so much of your goodness when with you lately. You will then, perhaps, best beloved father, lord, and brother (the first title belongs to your age and office, the second to your merits, and the third to your order), if your clerical and domestic duties permit, honour me by standing by me with your dear presence

and intercession, so that my offering may be acceptable in God's sight.

And, lastly, I would remind you that you pass our cloister, and must not seek other quarters! But one of our cells must content you.

May you be preserved in Christ Jesus our Lord! In our cloister at Erfurt.

MARTIN OF MANSFELD.

I scarcely like to moot it, but if it were not beneath the dignity of their order, and did not give too much trouble, I would esteem the presence of the members of the College at my ordination at Erfurt a great honour.

II

TO JOHN BRAUN

Luther had been hurriedly summoned by Frederick the Wise, on the recommendation of Staupitz, to be Professor in Wittenberg in 1508; he apologises for not bidding adieu.

March 17, 1509.

To the saintly and Right Reverend Father in God, Herr John Braun, priest in Eisenach, my beloved lord and father.

Greeting from Brother Martin Luther, the Augustinian monk!

Stop wondering, honoured father, that I stole secretly away from you as if no friendship existed between us, or as if I had been ungrateful enough to root out of my heart all remembrance of your great kindness to me, or let a rough north wind blow away my love for you. Indeed it is not so, although my actions may lead you to suppose this.

I have certainly left—that I must confess, and yet I have not gone away, for the best part of me, at all times, remains with you.

For although I have departed in body, I am ever with you in thought wherever you are, and I hope you will never feel differently towards me from what you do now.

But to come to the point. In order to get quit of the dreadful idea that your love might perhaps begin to doubt my fidelity to you, I have torn myself away from my manifold occupations to write you, as it is so difficult to convey anything. And what do you think is my sole object in writing, but to send you my love, and ask you to have as much confidence in me as I have in you ! And although I cannot compare myself with you in anything good, still my love for you is very great, and having nothing else to bestow, I once more assure you of it. For I know your generous heart desires nothing from me, but that we may be one heart and soul in the Lord, even as our faith is one and the same in Him. But you must not be offended at my leaving so quietly, for my departure was so sudden that even those in the house scarcely knew. I always intended writing, but had no time. However, I felt very sorry not to see you.

I am now, by God's command or permission, settled in Wittenberg, and very well, only the study of philosophy is most disagreeable to me ; for from the first I would have preferred theology, viz. the theology which goes to the kernel of the nut and touches the bone and the flesh.

But God is God, and man often errs in his judgment. He is our God, who will guide us lovingly to all eternity. Kindly note all this, which has been written in the greatest haste.

And when you have a messenger you will honour me with a line, and I shall do the same. With all good wishes from first to last, and credit me with what you would like to believe of me. Once more farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.
(Walch, v. 21, p. 514.)

III

TO THE ORDER OF AUGUSTINIANS IN ERFURT

Luther attains the height of his ambition, having been invited to accept the dignity of Doctor of Theology, which enabled him to expound the Holy Scriptures.

September 22, 1512.

Grace and peace, honoured and beloved fathers ! St. Luke's day is approaching, when I, in obedience to my superiors and highly esteemed Vicarius, am to be solemnly set apart to the dignity of Doctor of Theology—which I trust you have heard, through the honoured Prior in Wittenberg.

I will not apologise for accepting it, or talk of my unworthiness, as if by my humility I were seeking my own glory.

God knows, and my conscience also, whether I feel worthy of such almost fulsome expressions of honour.

Therefore, I plead with you, for Christ's sake, to commend me to God with one accord, for you know, according to the rights of love, it is your duty to do so—that His holy will may be accomplished in me ; also, that you would, if possible, honour me, and show this respect to our order, to be present on the occasion. I would not ask you to take such a toilsome journey and incur so much expense had I not been deputed to do so by the honoured Prior, and also, I would consider it most unseemly not to let my Erfurt friends know the day of my promotion, and invite them to be present. Doubtless you will act as we hope and expect, and we shall remember the kindness with gratitude. May you prosper in the Lord, to whom all of us commit you and your brothers in prayer.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.
(Walch, v. 21, p. 522.)

IV

TO GEORGE SPENLEIN, AUGUSTINIAN IN MEMMINGEN

In this year began Luther's acquaintance with Tauler's works. This letter contains an exquisite passage on true righteousness.

April 7, 1516.

Grace and peace in God and the Lord Jesus Christ ! Dearest Brother George ! I write to let you know that I have realised two gulden and a half, for what I sold for

you. One florin for the Brussels robe, half a florin for the Eisenach volume, and one for the cowl, etc. We cannot dispose of the rest, so have handed the money to the honoured Prior for you. Regarding the half-gulden you still owe him, you must see to the paying of it, or let him remit the debt. This will not be difficult, as the esteemed father is well disposed to you. Now I would like to know how it is with your soul, if it has at length learned to despise its own righteousness and seek comfort and joy in Christ's.

For, at present, the temptation to rest in one's own works is very powerful, especially with those who long to be good and pious. They are ignorant of God's righteousness, which has been so richly bestowed on us in Christ without money and price, and try to do good of themselves, till they fancy they can appear before God adorned with every grace. But they never get thus far. You, yourself, when with us in Erfurt suffered from this illusion, or rather delusion, and I also was a martyr to it, and even yet I have not overcome it. Therefore, dear brother, learn Christ and Him crucified. Praise and laud His name, and despairing of self, say to Him, "Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, but I am Thy sin. Thou hast taken what is mine, and given me what is Thine. Thou hast assumed that which Thou wert not, and given me what I had not."

Beware, my brother, at aiming at a purity which rebels against being classed with sinners. For Christ only dwells among sinners. For this He came from heaven, where He dwelt among saints, so that He might also sojourn with the sinful. Strive after such love, and thou wilt experience His sweetest consolation. For if by our own efforts we are to attain peace of conscience, why then did Christ die? Therefore thou wilt only find peace in Him when thou despairest of self and thine own works. He, Himself, will teach thee how in receiving thee He makes thy sins His, and His righteousness thine. When thou believest this firmly (for he is damned who does not believe) then bear patiently with erring brothers, making their sins thine. If there be any good

in thee, then receive ye one another, even as Christ received us, to the glory of God. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Be thou the same. If thou esteem thyself better than others, do not pride thyself on that, but be as one of them, bearing their burdens. For he is a pitiable saint who will not bear patiently with those worse than himself, and longs only for solitude, when he, through patience, prayer, and example, might be exercising a salutary influence over others. This is burying his Lord's talent, and not giving his fellow-servants their due. Therefore, be thou a lily or rose of Christ, knowing that thy walk must be among thorns.

Only see that through impatience, hasty judgments, or secret pride, thou dost not thyself become a thorn! "Christ's kingdom," says the psalmist, "subsists in the midst of its enemies." Why then rejoice in being surrounded only by faithful friends? If He, thy Lord, had only lived among the good, or had died only for His friends, for whom then would He have died, or with whom could He have lived? Remember this, brother, and pray for me. The Lord be with thee. Farewell, in the Lord! Your brother,

MARTIN LUTHER,

Augustinian.

(De Wette.)

V

TO GEORGE LEIFFER

Luther comforts a brother in Erfurt.

April 15, 1516.

Salvation in the Lord, most cherished Brother. I hear that your brotherly love is deeply tried by manifold waves of temptation. But God, the Father of mercies and all consolation, has placed over you the best of comforters and advisers, Father Bartholomew. Only see that you keep a tight hand over your thoughts, and make room for His word in your heart.

For I know from my own experience, as well as from

that of all troubled souls, that it is solely our own self-conceit which is at the root of all our disquietude.

For our eye is a knave, and, alas, what misery he has caused me, and still plagues me to the utmost. The cross of Christ is distributed through the whole world, and each receives his portion. Therefore pray do not cast thy portion from thee, but cherish it as a precious relic, certainly not enshrined in a casket of gold or silver, but in a golden heart filled with loving charity. For, even as the wood of the cross is consecrated through coming in contact with the flesh and blood of Christ, so that henceforth they are esteemed to be the costliest of relics, how much more will the injustice, persecution, and hatred of men, whether it be right or wrong, not through contact with His flesh, but through union with His loving heart and Divine will, which consecrates everything which is in touch with it, thereby transform the curse into a blessing, suffering into glory, and the cross into a crown of joy. Farewell, dearest friend and brother, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.

VI

TO JOHANN BERCKEN, AUG. PRIOR IN MAINZ

Luther thanks him for his kindness to a fugitive monk.

May 1, 1516.

Honoured and beloved Prior. I was sorry to hear that Baumgaertner, from our cloister in Dresden, who had fled in a hurried manner, and for good reason, had found refuge with you. I must thank you for receiving him so kindly, so that the scandal might be put an end to.

He is my lost sheep, who belongs to me, therefore I must try to restore the erring one, if God will.

So, I beg you, by our common faith in Christ, and the order of St. Augustine, that you will either send him to Dresden or to Wittenberg, or lovingly try to persuade him to return of his own free will. I shall receive

him with open arms, if he come ; he need have no fear on account of having injured me.

I know that offences will come, and it is no marvel when a man falls, but it is a miracle when he recovers himself and remains steadfast.

Peter fell, so that he might know he was human. Even in the present day the cedars of Lebanon, whose branches almost reach heaven, fell.

Yes, even an angel in heaven fell, which was indeed a marvel—and Adam fell in paradise.

So, is it to be wondered at that the reed should bend before the storm, and the glimmering torch be extinguished ? May the Lord Jesus enable you to perfect this good work. Amen. Farewell. From our cloister in Dresden.

MARTIN LUTHER.

VII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

June 8, 1516.

Thanks for your good wishes, dear Spalatin. Through the grace of God I reached home in good health, at least bodily. God knows if also spiritually. All this I owe to your love. I got your letter from the brothers. You write that our Serene Prince wishes to make our esteemed Vicar-General (Staupitz) a bishop, and desires your co-operation. You are acting uprightly as a friend, but I would like that your entreaties with the honoured father were not so full of fire ; for I shall act differently, so that he who is being over-praised may hesitate in his purpose. Do you wonder at this ? Certainly not because I despise your counsel, but because love prompts the desire, consequently the judgment is in abeyance. "For true love," says Chrysostom, "seldom judges aright." I say this because you are swayed by the Prince's favour, and I do not wish the esteemed father to do what you urge to please the Prince. Your Prince is fascinated with much that appears lovely in his sight, which is far from pleasing to God.

Frederick the Wise is very clever in worldly things,

but in those pertaining to God and the salvation of souls I consider him sevenfold blind, even as your Pfeffinger.

I do not say this in a corner to malign them, but to their faces at every opportunity. Were I certain that your project came from God, then, would that you had a tongue of fire, and the Pater were pure stubble! But remember that what you and the Prince are discussing secretly is known, for before I got your letter I heard that the esteemed father would be made Bishop of Kimsche.

These happy times are long gone by when it was considered a grand thing to be a bishop, but now there can be no more miserable position, for it means leading a life of gluttony and debauchery such as that of Sodom and Rome. You see this when you compare the life and work of the old bishops with ours.

How many are immersed in wars, while their homes have become a very hell of insatiable greed!

Notice how far this man is removed from such vices, so that when the time comes for him to be lured into the terrible vortex of the Bishop's courts you will try to prevent the calamity.

But enough of this! If your petition really admits of no delay tell me at once, because the esteemed father does not return from Antwerp till autumn, so I must send a special messenger to Cologne, where he told us to forward his letters. Farewell in the Lord, and pray for us. From the cloister at Wittenberg.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

VIII

TO MICHAEL DRESSEL

Augustinian Prior in Neustadt, whom Luther deposed because he could not keep the peace with the brethren.

June 22, 1516.

Salvation and peace! But not such peace as is manifest to the natural man, but that which lies beneath the cross, viz. the peace which passeth all understanding. Thou art longing for peace, but in the wrong way; for thou seekest it as the world gives it, and not as Christ does. Dost

thou know, dear father, that in this matter God deals in a wondrous manner with His people, having placed His peace in the midst of dispeace, nay, in the very thick of temptation and dissensions. "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Therefore it is not he whom no one disturbs who has peace—that is the world's peace, but he who is troubled on every side, and bears all quietly and joyfully. Thou sayest with Israel, "Peace, peace, and there is no peace." Cry rather with Christ, "Cross, cross!" And yet there is no cross. For, as soon as thou canst joyfully say, "Blessed cross, of all kinds of wood there is none like unto thee." Then, in that moment, the cross has ceased to be a cross. See, then, how graciously the Lord is leading thee to true peace in surrounding thee with so much of the cross. For he who seeks peace will find it. And the best way to seek it is, when affliction overtakes you, to receive it with joy, as a sacred relic, and cease searching vainly for a peace which commends itself to your lower nature. For God considers any such peace far inferior to His peace, which is inseparable from the cross and the troubles of this life. Farewell, and pray for me, dear father. May the Lord reign in you.

WITTENBERG.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Vicar.

IX

TO JOHN LANGE, PRIOR AT ERFURT

It was in Lange's church in Erfurt, still standing, where the first evangelical sermon was preached.

Luther begins lecturing on Galatians.

October 26, 1516.

I would require two secretaries, for I do nothing almost all day but write letters, therefore if I repeat myself you will understand why it is.

I am lecturer in the cloister, reader at meals, preach daily, and direct the students' studies, am the Prior's vicar (which means being vicar eleven times over), inspector of fish-ponds at Leitzkau, must espouse the

Herzberg people's cause at Torgau, expounder of St. Paul and the Psalms, besides my letter-writing. Behold what a leisurely man I am, and in addition am plagued by the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

I sent several of the brethren you sent me to Magister Spangenberg, to take them away from this pestilential air. I felt much drawn to the two from Cologne, and having such a high opinion of their abilities, kept them with me, although at much expense. We support twenty-two priests, forty-two youths, etc., out of our poverty. But the Lord will provide.

You write that you began to lecture on the Sentences yesterday. I shall begin to expound the Epistle to the Galatians to-morrow, although I fear that with the plague here I shall not be able to continue. It has already robbed us of two or three, but not in one day. The smith opposite lost a son, who was in good health yesterday, and the other is infected. Yes, indeed, here it is, and is beginning to rage with great vehemence especially among the young. You counsel me to flee for refuge to you. But why?

The world will not come to an end although Brother Martin perish. But if the plague spread, I shall send the brothers out into the world. As for me, seeing I have been placed here, my vows of obedience demand that I remain till I am ordered elsewhere. Not that I have no fear of death, for I am not the Apostle Paul, but only his expounder, and I still hope the Lord will deliver me from this fear also.

Farewell, and think of us. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

1517

On 31st October Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of the Schloss Church in Wittenberg. He was impelled to this, through Tetzel's sale of Indulgences, at the instigation of the Archbishop of Mayence.

X

TO CHRISTOPH SCHEURL

This letter shows Luther's modesty. Scheurl espoused Luther's cause, though later he became estranged from it, when practising law in Nürnberg.

January 17, 1517.

I have received your letter, my excellent Christoph, which was most agreeable, and yet displeasing to me. Why knit your brows over this? What could please me more than to hear you praise our Staupitz, or rather the Lord Jesus, who dwells in our Vicar-General, so highly? Nothing could rejoice me more than to hear Christ's voice resounding through him, and bearing fruit. But, on the other hand, what could be more disagreeable than that you should strive for my friendship by loading me with praise? I will not be your friend, for my friendship can be no credit to you, if the proverb be true, "Friends must have all things in common."¹ Now, if what I have become yours, you would only be richer in sin, folly, and ignominy. For these are my possessions which you dignify by very fine names. Still, I know you mean to say, "It is not you, but Christ I admire in you"—to which I reply, "How can Christ who is pure righteousness dwell alongside sin?" And is not this the greatest pride when a man imagines himself to be the temple of Christ? Only an apostle dare boast of this. I wish you joy in the friendship of our Vicar-General, but do not drag yourself down through my friendship. No doubt our honoured father praises me everywhere, to my great grief and peril, saying it is Christ he lauds in me, and people try to make me believe this.

Truly a hard demand! The more of such eulogists one has, and the closer they cleave to us, the more hurtful they are. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household," etc. For God's favour decreases as that of man increases. God will either be all or nothing. And the worst of it is, the more thou humblest thyself, and puttest

¹ Tauler's *Higher Life*.

praise and favour from thee, the more do these pursue thee to thy great injury. Oh, how much are hatred and blame to be preferred to praise! For hatred only injures us once, while love threatens us with double danger. I do not write thus to thee, best of all friends, because I scorn your noble heart, but because I have so little confidence in my own. You act like a true Christian who lightly esteems no one except himself. For all are not Christians who esteem others for their learning, virtue, piety, and renown (for the heathen do this also), but it is they who love the poor, needy, and sinful, who are Christ-like.

The psalmist calls those blessed who receive, not the learned, wise, and pious, but the poor and needy.

And, lastly, Christ declares that what is done to the least of His little ones is done to Him, when He might have said the opposite. But what is great in man's eyes is often despicable in God's sight. Now, if you would be my friend, do not cause me to be despised of God, by praising me both to myself and others. But if you cannot refrain from praising Christ in me, then mention His name, and not mine.

Why should Christ's cause not have the stamp of His name upon it, or be branded with mine? You see how eloquent I am! So, be patient, my friend. From our cloister in Wittenberg.

MARTIN LUTHER,
of the Augustinian Order.

(Schütze.)

XI

TO JOHN LANGE

About Erasmus.

March 1, 1517.

I am at present reading our Erasmus, but my heart recoils more and more from him. But one thing I admire is, that he constantly and learnedly accuses not only the monks, but the priests, of a lazy, deep-rooted ignorance.

Only, I fear he does not spread Christ and God's

grace sufficiently abroad, of which he knows very little. The human is to him of more importance than the divine.

Although unwilling to judge him, I warn you not to read blindly what he writes. For we live in perilous times, and every one who is a good Hebrew and Greek scholar is not a true Christian; even Dr. Hieronymus, with his five languages, cannot approach Augustine with his one tongue, although Erasmus views all this from a different standpoint. Those who ascribe something to man's freedom of will regard those things differently from those who know only God's free grace. From our desert Wittenberg.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

(Lindner's Selected Letters.)

XII

TO CHRISTOPH SCHEURL

Luther's modesty as to his own classical attainments.

May 6, 1517.

My greeting! To begin with, best of friends, I must thank you for Staupitz's pamphlet, but I am quite ashamed that the honoured father should circulate my insignificant writings among you.

Truly I did not write them for the cultured Nürnbergers, but for our rough Saxons, for whom religious instruction must be broken into infinite particles.

Even were I to do my utmost, I never could furnish anything which would find favour with men so versed in classical literature, and how much less in your eyes, seeing my sole endeavour is to bring myself down to the capacity of the common people. Therefore, pray keep what I write from the learned; and I took great pains, according to your instructions, to write a friendly letter to Eck, avoiding everything disagreeable. I do not know if he has received it.

I send you these theses or propositions, and through you to Link, or to any one who may like such trifles.

If I do not deceive myself; they are not Ciceronian,

but those of our Carlstadt, rather of St. Augustine, which are far more sublime and superior to those of Cicero, even as Augustine, or rather Christ, is exalted above Cicero.

These propositions are a standing reproach to the ignorance of those who consider them paradoxes (very striking ones), rather than look upon them as orthodox (that is, in accordance with the pure doctrine of the Church universal), not to speak of those who are shameless enough to malign them as errors, a class of people who neither read St. Paul's Epistles, or, at least, read them without comprehending them, thus leading themselves and others astray.

To modest men who do not quite see through them they appear wonderful, and I regard them as fundamental truths in their primitive purity.

Praise be to God who causes light to arise out of the darkness. I presume our father vicar is not with you. We hope he may come to us. Dr. Christian Reuter has departed this temporal life. May God give him eternal life. Amen. Amsdorf and all friends greet you. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

XIII

TO JOHN LANGE

Luther boasts that true theology is flourishing in Wittenberg.

May 18, 1517.

Our theology and that of St. Augustine, by the grace of God, is making rapid progress in our university. Aristotle is continuing to fall from his throne, and his end is only a matter of time; and all object to hearing lectures on the text-books of the Sentences, and no one need expect an audience who does not expound this theology, viz. that of the Bible or St. Augustine, or some other of the honoured Church teachers. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

Master Christian Goldschmidt, who is here, sends greeting.

XIV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN, AT THE SCHLOSS

Salvation! See that you, with the father confessor and his friend, come about nine o'clock. If Herr Christopher, the ambassador, is with you, bring him also, for I have given orders to invite him. Farewell, but see that you procure wine for us, as you are aware that you are coming from the court to the cloister, and not from the cloister to the court.

MARTIN LUTHER.

XV

TO CHRISTOPH SCHEURL

September 11, 1517.

To my highly esteemed Herr Christoph Scheurl, my greeting. Although I have no pretext for writing to such an excellent man as you, still I think the fact of having recently acquired such a warm, upright friend is reason enough for doing so. And even should one, once in a while, have to complain of getting no letters, surely even this silence would merit a few jocular lines, and how much more a regular correspondence to maintain the friendship, not to say rivet it closer. Even the holy Hieronymus begged his friend that he would at least write to say he knew of nothing to write about. Therefore I determined to talk nonsense, rather than be silent. But, dear God, how seldom does this Brother Martin, who has been falsely called a great theologian, take up the pen without prating? But it seems as if I would write a book instead of a letter. My object in addressing you was to show how highly I esteemed you, and not to cause you to express a similar opinion of me, but only to convince you that you might trust me as you would yourself.

It just occurs to me, that in sending me the writings of our Vicar-General through Ulrich Pindar,¹ I owed you two ducats; I have partly sold them, and given some to the esteemed friends of this good man.

¹ Probably the famous professor of medicine, who flourished at Frederick's Court.—TRANSLATOR.

The money which I drew from those I sold I gave, according to your directions, to the poor, viz. to myself and my brother monks. For, upon God's dear earth, I know of no one poorer than myself. I now beg you to send me a gulden more of those writings, and I shall remit the money when I have sold them. There are still many who wish them. At the same time, I send you my singular propositions, which seem quite unreasonable to many. You can direct the attention of our learned and thoughtful Eck to them, so that I may know what faults he finds in them. All your friends here, of whom Herr Licentiate Amsdorf and Dr. Hieronymus are the dearest, send greetings, also Peter the Barber, whom you honour with your friendship. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian Cloister.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

XVI

TO ALBRECHT OF MAYENCE

On this day Luther nailed the ninety-five theses on the door of the Schloss Kirche in Wittenberg, being the first time he opposed the Church authorities.

October 31, 1517.

To the Right Reverend Father in Christ, Lord Albrecht, Archbishop of Magdeburg and Mayence, Markgrave of Brandenburg, his esteemed lord and shepherd in Christ. The grace of God be with him.

May your Electoral Highness graciously permit me, the least and most unworthy of men, to address you. The Lord Jesus is my witness that I have long hesitated, on account of my unworthiness, to carry out what I now boldly do, moved thereto by a sense of the duty I owe you, right reverend father. May your Grace look graciously on me, dust and ashes, and respond to my longing for your ecclesiastical approval.

With your Electoral Highness's consent, the Papal Indulgence for the rebuilding of St. Peter's in Rome is being carried through the land. I do not complain so much of the loud cry of the preacher of Indulgences,

which I have not heard, but regret the false meaning, which the simple folk attach to it, the poor souls believing that when they have purchased such letters they have secured their salvation, also, that the moment the money tingles in the box souls are delivered from purgatory, and that all sins will be forgiven through a letter of Indulgence, even that of reviling the blessed Mother of God, were any one blasphemous enough to do so. And, lastly, that through these Indulgences the man is freed from all penalties! Ah, dear God! Thus are those souls which have been committed to your care, dear father, being led in the paths of death, and for them you will be required to render an account. For the merits of no bishop can secure the salvation of the souls entrusted to him which is not always assured through the grace of God, the apostle admonishing us "to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," and, that the way which leads to life is so narrow, that the Lord, through the prophets Amos and Zechariah, likens those who attain to eternal life to brands plucked from the burning, and above all, the Lord points to the difficulty of redemption. Therefore, I could be silent no longer.

How then can you, through false promises of Indulgences, which do not promote the salvation or sanctification of their souls, lead the people into carnal security, by declaring them free from the painful consequences of their wrong-doing with which the Church was wont to punish their sins?

For deeds of piety and love are infinitely better than Indulgences, and yet the bishops do not preach these so earnestly, although it is their principal duty to proclaim the love of Christ to their people. Christ has nowhere commanded Indulgences to be preached, but the Gospel. So to what danger does a bishop expose himself, who instead of having the Gospel proclaimed among the people, dooms it to silence, while the cry of Indulgences resounds through the land? Will Christ not say to them, "Ye strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel"?

In addition, reverend father, it has gone abroad under your name, but doubtless without your knowledge,

that this Indulgence is the priceless gift of God, whereby the man may be reconciled to God, and escape the fires of purgatory, and that those who purchase the Indulgences have no need of repentance.

What else can I do, right reverend father, than beg your Serene Highness carefully to look into this matter, and do away with this little book of instructions, and command those preachers to adopt another style of preaching, else another may arise and refute them, by writing another book in answer to the previous one, to the confusion of your Serene Highness, the very idea of which alarms me greatly. I hope that your Serene Highness may graciously deign to accept the faithful service which your insignificant servant, with true devotion, would render you. The Lord keep you to all eternity. Amen. Wittenberg, the night before All Saints' Day 1517.

If agreeable to your Grace, perhaps you would glance at my enclosed theses, that you may see the opinion on the Indulgences is a very varied one, while those who proclaim them fancy they cannot be disputed. Your unworthy son,

MARTIN LUTHER,

Augustinian, set apart as Doctor of Sacred Theology.

(De Wette.)

XVII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

November 1517.

My greetings ! I had decided, dear Spalatin, to tell no one of the dialogue with Erasmus, my sole reason being that it was so delightful, so full of humour, so clever, and, I would almost say, woven together in such an Erasmus-like manner, that the reader is tempted to laugh and enjoy the failings in the Church of Christ, which ought rather to grieve all Christians, and be borne before the Lord in prayer. But seeing you plead so earnestly to see it, here it is, and after perusing it, return it to me. You write that the Prince has promised me a robe, so I would like to know to whom he has entrusted the matter. From our cloister.

BROTHER MARTIN,

Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.

XVIII

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK OF SAXONY

The founder of Wittenberg University, who did so much to protect the pure gospel,—upon a tax levied.

November or December 1517.

Most gracious and dear lord, Elector Frederick of Saxony. Some time ago I was promised, through Dr. Hersfelder, a new robe, so I now wish to remind your Grace of it. But I would beg, gracious lord, that if Pfeffinger is to arrange the matter, as he did before, he would do it in reality, for he is very good at spinning fine words, but these do not always produce good cloth.

I have heard through Prior Lange at Erfurt that your Electoral Grace is displeased with our worthy Father Staupitz because of something he has written. So I called upon him when he came to see you at Torgau, and said I could not bear to think His Excellence was in disgrace with your Grace. I soon found that no one had such a high place in his heart as the Elector of Saxony, and he does not know how he can have offended except by loving you too much. I pray your Grace would continue to him your favour, even as he has ever been loyal to you. Thus I wish to prove my fidelity to you, to let you see I merit my Court dress.

I have also heard that at the end of the present financial year your Grace purposes laying another and heavier tax upon us, so I beseech you do not despise a poor beggar's prayer, for my heart, as well as the hearts of many who love you dearly, are, because of the extra tax, very heavy, and it has robbed your Electoral Highness of much of your good name and favour among the people.

God has endowed your Grace with great wisdom, so that no one sees farther in these matters than you; but sometimes God wills it so that great wisdom may learn something from one with less, so that one may depend on God alone, who, it is to be hoped, may spare you to us

for our good, and afterwards preserve your soul unto life eternal. Amen. Your Electoral Highness's obedient chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

Luther's first German letter; his extant letters till this date are all in Latin.

1518

Luther at the General Assembly of Augustinian monks at Heidelberg, where he publicly defended his theses. Luther cited to appear at Rome, but the Elector arranged he should appear at Augsburg instead, before Cajetan.

XIX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

February 15, 1518.

About the motives which should accompany good works. Salvation! What you write, or rather prescribe to me to do, that I am doing, most excellent Spalatin. And I thank the most Serene Prince, through you, for the princely piece of venison that he sent our new magister, and I have told them what an honour it is. But I am the one who is most delighted, for human nature loves a cheerful giver.

You ask me two questions. The one, "If one wishes to sacrifice something, or do a good work, what ought to be his motive?" I answer briefly, a man must be animated in all he does by a feeling of despair as well as confidence. The despair appertains to thyself and thy work, but the joyous confidence is founded on God and His mercy. For the Spirit says, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, and in those that hope in his mercy." The other question concerned the power of the Indulgence, and what it can accomplish. This matter is still doubtful, but I shall say privately to you and our friends that I consider present-day Indulgences as a deceiving of souls, and of no use except as an encouragement to lazy Christians. And this is beyond dispute, my enemies and the whole Church being obliged to admit

it is, viz. that alms and kindness towards one's neighbour are far higher than the Indulgences.

Therefore, I admonish you to buy no Indulgences, as long as you have poor neighbours to whom you can give the Indulgence money.

If you act otherwise, I am blameless; the responsibility is yours. I firmly believe that those who neglect the poor and purchase Indulgences merit condemnation.

I shall tell you a great cause of annoyance to me, viz. the busybodies have invented a new mode of attack, by circulating everywhere that our Serene Prince is at the bottom of all I do, as if he caused me to make the Archbishop of Magdeburg hated! Dear one, advise me how to act, for I am deeply grieved that the Prince should come into ill-repute through me, and I fear being the cause of dispeace between such great princes. But I shall gladly permit the Prince to lead me into a disputation, or place me on my trial, if he would openly give me a safe-conduct, but I dislike the innocent Prince being blamed on my account. They are truly perverse people who love the darkness and hate the light.

They have traversed three lands to lay hold of John Reuchlin, and have dragged him hither against his will, while I am at the door, and pleading to be taken, and they leave me alone and whisper in corners that which they cannot defend. Farewell, and forgive me for making so many words about this, for I am talking to a friend. From our cloister.

MARTIN LUTHER,

Augustinian.

(Both free and bound in the Lord.)

XX

TO CHRISTOPH SCHEURL

Luther laments the spread of his theses.

March 5, 1518.

To the learned Herr Christoph Scheurl, my esteemed friend in Christ, my greeting! I have received two letters from you, a Latin and a German one, my good Christoph,

along with a present from that superior man, Albrecht Dürer, and my Latin and German propositions. You wonder I did not tell you of them. But I did not wish to have them widely circulated. I only intended submitting them to a few learned men for examination, and if they disapproved of them, to suppress them ; or make them known through their publications, in the event of their meeting with your approval. But now they are being spread abroad and translated everywhere, which I never could have credited, so that I regret having given birth to them—not that I am unwilling to proclaim the truth manfully, for there is nothing I more ardently desire, but because this way of instructing the people is of little avail. As yet I am still uncertain as to some points, and would have gone into others more particularly, leaving some out entirely, had I foreseen all this.

From the rapid spread of the theses I gather what the greater part of the nation think of this kind of Indulgence, in spite of them having to disguise their opinions for fear of the Jews ; still I must have the proofs of my propositions in readiness, although I cannot publish them yet, having been delayed through the Bishop of Brandenburg—whose advice I asked—being so long in returning them. Yes, when the Lord grants me leisure, I purpose issuing a book on the use and misuse of the Indulgences, in order to suppress the before-mentioned points. I have no longer any doubt that the people are deceived, not through the Indulgences, but through their use. When I have finished these propositions I will send them to you. Meantime, pray remember me to Albrecht Dürer, that excellent man, and assure him of my continued gratitude. But I expect both of you to discard your exalted opinion of me, and not to expect more from me than I can render, for I am nothing, and can do nothing, and am daily becoming more of a cipher. I wrote lately to Dr. John Eck, to you, and to all the others, but fear you have not received the letter. I am most anxious that the pamphlet of our highly esteemed vicar "Upon Love," which appeared the other day in Munich, and made such

a sensation, should be reissued among you. For we all hunger and thirst after love. I commit you to God.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

XXI

TO JOHN LANGE

Luther complains of his opponents raging against him.

March 21, 1518.

The vendors of Indulgences are thundering at me from the pulpit, so that their stock of insulting epithets is exhausted. They tell the people that I shall be burned in fourteen days—another makes it a month. They are also issuing counter-propositions, so that I fear ere long they will burst with fury. I am advised not to go to Heidelberg, so that they may not accomplish through deceit and wiles what they are unable to achieve through force. But I shall render obedience, and come on foot, and, if God will, pass through Erfurt; but do not wait for me, for I shall scarcely be able to start till the Wednesday after Quasimodo.

Our Prince, who devotes much time to the study of this theology, and loves it, is a warm protector of Carlstadt and me, and will not permit me to be lured to Rome.

They know this, and are furious at it. So that you may not have an exaggerated account of the burning of Tetzels theses, I shall tell you the facts. The students, who are heartily sick of sophistical teaching and longing for the sacred Scriptures, are most favourable to me. Having heard that Tetzels, the originator of them, had sent a man from Halle, they immediately went and asked how he dared bring such things here. Some bought a few, while others robbed him of several, and burned the rest—about eight hundred copies—after proclaiming that the burning and funeral of Tetzels answer to them would take place at the Market at two o'clock. And all this was done without the knowledge of the Prince, the Town Council, or any of us. We all think it very bad of our people treating the man so. I am innocent,

but feel certain I get all the blame. It has caused much talk, especially among Tetzels followers, who are naturally very angry. I do not know how it will all end, only it has placed me in a more perilous position.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XXII

TO JOHANN VON STAUPITZ

To Staupitz, his Superior and Father in Christ Jesus.

March 31, 1518.

My greeting! Although overwhelmed by business, I feel constrained briefly to address my father in the Lord.

To begin with, I am quite willing to admit that my name is in bad odour with very many.

For these good folks assert that I despise psalters and other forms of prayer, nay, even good works themselves. But St. Paul himself was often treated in the same way, some accusing him of saying, "Let us do evil, that good may come."

But I have kept firm to Tauler's theology and that other treatise which you had printed through our Auri-faber. I teach that man must trust solely in Christ Jesus—neither in prayer, merit, nor works, but hope for blessedness only through God's mercy.

It is from this that these people extract poison and disseminate it everywhere, as you see.

Only as it was neither good nor bad report which made me act so, therefore I take no notice of all this, although it is those things which bring down the hatred of the schoolmen about my neck.

Because I prefer the mystical writings and the Bible to them, their wrath and jealousy are unbounded. I do not read the scholastics blindfolded, as they do, but ponder them. The apostle told us to prove all things, and hold to that which is good. I do not despise all theirs, neither consider it all good. But these creatures generally kindle a fire out of a spark, and make an

elephant out of a flea. When it was permitted to a Thomas to stand out against the whole world, and a Scotus, Gabriel, and others to contradict him, and when, even among the scholastics, there are as many sects as there are heads, or rather every single head daily builds up a new system of divinity, why should I not have the same liberty?

But when God lifts up His hand no one can stay it, and when He rests no one can arouse Him.

Farewell, and pray for me, and for the cause of divine truth wherever it may be hidden.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

XXIII

TO JOHANN VON STAUPITZ

Luther begs his Vicar-General, who hated theological strife, to send his "Resolutiones" to Pope Leo X.

May 30, 1518.

I remember, reverend father, that among the many comforting words with which you consoled me, was that of Repentance—that word with which the Lord Jesus in such a marvellous manner was wont to strengthen His people. I received your word as a voice from heaven. True repentance always begins with a longing after righteousness and God. This your word pierced me like a sharp arrow, and I, at once, began to compare the portions of Scripture which treat of repentance, and, behold, what a treat was in store for me—the words with that meaning crowding upon me, from all directions, so that this word, which up till now had been the bitterest in the Bible to me, sounded dearer and sweeter than any other. (Here follows an exhaustive analysis of the Greek for repentance, which means a change of disposition—consequently not primarily of works, but a revolution of sentiment.)

Then just as my heart was filled with such thoughts, there began to resound around us proclamations of Indulgences for the forgiveness of sins, but no exhortation

to true spiritual conflict with sin. In short, not a word was heard of true repentance, but the Indulgence-mongers were bold enough to glorify and praise themselves, while hurling invectives against repentance. I had to listen to all this lauding of self in a way hitherto undreamt of, and certainly a most unimportant part of confession. In addition, they taught so many godless lies boldly, that whoever differed from them was at once denounced as a heretic, condemned to the flames, and counted worthy of eternal damnation. Not being able to check their madness, I set myself modestly to throw doubts on their teaching, confident in the testimony borne by the doctors and the whole Church, who, from time immemorial, thought it better to repent than purchase Indulgences. Having discussed the matter openly, I unfortunately roused the opposition of all who are concerned about the dear gold, or shall I say, the dear souls? For these dear folk are wondrous cunning, and being unable to refute me, they declare the Pope's authority will be injured through my disputation. This is the traffic, most esteemed father, which compels me with much personal danger to come to the front—I, who have ever loved obscurity, and would vastly prefer being a spectator of the lively game which these worthy and learned men are carrying on at present, than be the centre of observation and ridicule.

But I see weeds grow up among cabbage, and black is placed alongside white, to make it more attractive. Therefore I beseech you to forward my poor "Resolutiones" to the good Pope Leo X., so that they may plead my cause with His Holiness against the wicked intrigues of evil-disposed persons.

Not that I wish to lead you into danger, for I take the entire responsibility of all I do. May Christ judge whether I have said what is His, or my own, without whom even the Papal tongue can utter nothing, and in whose hand is the heart of kings. I expect to receive Christ's verdict through the Papal throne. For the rest, I can only answer the warnings of my friends with Reuchlin's words: "He who is poor need fear nothing,

for he has nothing to lose." I have neither gold nor possessions, nor do I desire them.

If I had a good reputation and honour, I am being robbed of them by Him who gave them. My useless body, weakened by many hardships, still remains. If they deprive me of this in God's service, they only render me poorer by an hour or two of life. My sweet Redeemer is sufficient for me. I shall praise Him all my life. May He keep you through all eternity, my dearest father. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

XXIV

TO POPE LEO X.

Luther writes submissively to the Pope, in whose justice and love of truth he seems to have implicit confidence.

May 30, 1518.

Martin Luther, Augustinian monk, desires everlasting salvation to the Most Holy Father, Leo X.

I know, most holy father, that evil reports are being spread about me, some friends having vilified me to your Holiness, as if I were trying to belittle the power of the Keys and of the Supreme Pontiff, therefore I am being accused of being a heretic, a renegade, and a thousand other ill names are being hurled at me, enough to make my ears tingle and my eyes start in my head, but my one source of confidence is an innocent conscience. But all this is nothing new, for I am decorated with such marks of distinction in our own land, by those honourable and straightforward people who are themselves afflicted with the worst of consciences. But, most holy father, I must hasten to the point, hoping your Holiness will graciously listen to me, for I am as awkward as a child.

Some time ago the preaching of the apostolic jubilee of the Indulgences was begun, and soon made such headway that these preachers thought they could say what they wished, under the shelter of your Holiness's name,

alarming the people at such malicious, heretical lies being proclaimed to the derision of the spiritual powers. And, not satisfied with pouring out their venom, they have disseminated the little book in which their malicious lies are confirmed, binding the father confessors by oath to inculcate those lies upon their people. I shall not enlarge upon the disgraceful greed, which can never be satisfied, with which every syllable of this tiny book reeks. This is true, and no one can shut his eyes to the scandal, for it is manifest in the book. And they continue to lead the people captive with their vain consolation, plucking, as the prophet Micah says, "their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones," while they wallow in abundance themselves. They use your Holiness's name to allay the uproar they cause, and threaten them with fire and sword, and the ignominy of being called heretics; nay, one can scarcely believe the wiles they use to cause confusion among the people. Complaints are universal as to the greed of the priests, while the power of the Keys and the Pope is being evil spoken of in Germany. And when I heard of such things I burned with zeal for the honour of Christ, or, if some will have it so, the young blood within me boiled; and yet I felt it did not behove me to do anything in the matter except to draw the attention of some prelates to the abuses. Some acted upon the hint, but others derided it, and interpreted it in various ways. For the dread of your Holiness's name, and the threat of being placed under the ban, was all-powerful. At length I thought it best not to be harsh, but oppose them by throwing doubts upon their doctrines, preparatory to a disputation upon them. So I threw down the gauntlet to the learned by issuing my theses, and asking them to discuss them, either by word of mouth, or in writing, which is a well-known fact.

From this, most holy father, has such a fire been kindled, that, to judge from the hue and cry, one would think the whole world had been set ablaze.

And perhaps this is because I, through your Holiness's apostolic authority, am a doctor of theology,

and they do not wish to admit that I **am** entitled, according to the usage of all universities in Christendom, openly to discuss, not only Indulgences, but many higher doctrines, such as Divine Power, Forgiveness, and Mercy.

Now, what shall I do? I cannot retract, and I see what jealousy and hatred I have roused through the explanation of my theses. Besides, I am most unwilling to leave my corner only to hear harsh judgments against myself, but also because I am a stupid dunderhead in this learned age, and too ignorant to deal with such weighty matters. For, in these golden times, when the number of the learned is daily increasing, and arts and sciences are flourishing, not to speak of the Greek and Hebrew tongues, so that even a Cicero were he now alive would creep into a corner, although he never feared light and publicity, sheer necessity alone drives me to cackle as a goose among swans.

So, to reconcile my opponents if possible, and satisfy the expectations of many, I let in the light of day upon my thoughts, which you can see in my explanation of my propositions on Indulgences.

I made them public that I might have the protection of your Holiness's name, and find refuge beneath the shadow of your wings. So all may see from this how I esteem the spiritual power, and honour the dignity of the Keys. For, if I were such as they say, and had not held a public discussion on the subject, which every doctor is entitled to do, then assuredly his Serene Highness Frederick, Elector of Saxony, who is an ardent lover of Christian and apostolic truth, would not have suffered such a dangerous person in his University of Wittenberg.

And also, the beloved and learned doctors and magisters of our University, who cleave firmly to our religion, would certainly have expelled me from their midst. And is it not strange that my enemies not only try to convict me of sin and put me to shame, but also the Elector, and the whole University? Therefore, most holy father, I prostrate myself at your feet, placing myself and all I am and have at your disposal, to be dealt with as you see fit. My cause hangs on the will of your Holiness, by whose

verdict I shall either save or lose my life. Come what may, I shall recognise the voice of your Holiness to be that of Christ, speaking through you. If I merit death, I do not refuse to die, for "the earth is the Lord's," and all that is therein, to whom be praise to all eternity! Amen. May He preserve your Holiness to life eternal.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

XXV

TO WENZEL LINK

Wenzelaus Link studied in Wittenberg, and was afterwards pastor in Nürnberg.

July 10, 1518.

Our vicar, John Lange, says that Count Albrecht of Mansfeld has warned him not to let me leave here, as some great people have given orders that I should be suffocated or drowned.

I am like Jeremiah, the man of strife, whom the Pharisees daily tormented with new doctrines, as they called them. But I have only taught the pure gospel, therefore I always knew that I would be a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. But it would ill become me not to do all this for the Lord Jesus, who says to all His people, "I will shew him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake!"

The more they threaten, the more confident and joyful I become: my wife and child are provided for; my land, house, and all I have are in order, and if they rob me of my good name, nothing remains but my miserable body.

From the beginning God's word is on this wise, that all who cleave to it must with the apostles be hourly prepared to suffer the loss of all things, nay, even to meet death itself.

Were it not so, then it would be no word of Christ, for it has been made known and spread abroad, through the death of many, and will go on, being thus maintained and renewed through manifold deaths.

For our Bridegroom is a blood-stained Bridegroom.

Therefore pray that the Lord Jesus may strengthen the confidence of His faithful sinners. I preached the other day upon the tyranny of the officials and vicars, etc. The people marvelled that they had never heard anything of this before. We now wait to see what I shall have to endure on this account. I have lighted a new fire, but the word of truth does this also, the sign that shall be spoken against. I do not concern myself about the fault-finders. To Christ alone I shall defer in the ministry.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XXVI

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Melanchthon was only twenty-one when sent by Reuchlin to teach Greek at the Elector's request.

Aug. 31, 1518.

To the learned George Spalatin, my faithful friend in Christ, salvation! What you wrote of our Philip has all come to pass, and will also be verified in the future, as you know. The fourth day after his arrival he gave a learned and eloquent address, to the delight of all who heard him, so you need not laud him to us, for we have already formed the highest estimate of his person and intellect, and are most grateful to the Prince for conferring him upon us, and also for your services in the matter; and see how skilfully you can praise him to the Prince.

So long as he lives I desire no other teacher in Greek.

I only fear that our coarse food will not suit his delicate constitution, as I hear he is getting too small a salary, so that the Leipsic people are already boasting that they will deprive us of him. For they wished him at first.

I, and others, fear Herr Pfeffinger has been too faithful a steward, as usual, to his Electoral Highness, in giving Philip as little as possible. Therefore, dear Spalatin (I speak freely, for it is with my best friend I talk), see that

you do not lightly esteem his youth and boyish appearance, for the man is worthy of all honour. And I do not wish that we and our University should do such a mean thing, thereby causing our detractors to speak evil of us. I send you my hurried opinion of the coarse and rude Sylvestrum (high official in the Pope's household), my sophistical opponent, for I scarcely deem him worth my attention. I thank God and you for protecting me and my cause. Farewell, and love me in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

XXVII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther at the Diet of Augsburg. Preached in Weimar before the Elector on the way thither.

October 11, 1518.

Salvation! There is nothing new here, only every one is talking of Dr. Luther who has lighted such a great fire. Show yourself a man, and teach the young people what is right, but I go hence to offer myself up for them and you, if God wills it.

For I will rather die and be deprived of your dear society, hard as that would be for me to all eternity, than be the means of ruining the liberal studies and elegant learning, thus causing the enemy to triumph. Italy is, as Egypt was long ago, enveloped in thick darkness, being entirely ignorant of Christ and all that appertains to Him, and yet we must submit to them ruling over us, and teaching us in their own way both faith and morals. Thus does God manifest His wrath towards us in the lament of the prophet, "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them."

Farewell in the Lord, dear Philip, and turn away the wrath of God through your fervent and earnest prayers.

MARTIN LUTHER.

XXVIII

TO ANDREAS VON CARLSTADT

Carlstadt had never seen a Bible when he became Doctor of Theology in Wittenberg in 1510. Later he destroyed the images in churches.

October 14, 1518.

May you have all good for time and blessedness hereafter, esteemed Herr Doctor ! I am pressed for time, but shall write more again. My cause has assumed a very dismal aspect these three days, so that I have lost hope of returning to you, fully expecting to come under the ban.

For the Legate¹ is determined I shall not hold a public disputation, refusing to argue with me alone, and declares he will not be my judge, but will treat me as a father. Nevertheless, the only words he will listen to from me are, "I recant, and confess I have erred," and I was unwilling to say those words.

But the keenest discussion has been over these two articles : First, that I have said that the Indulgence is not the treasure (*Schatz*) of the merits of our dear Lord and Saviour Christ ; and the next, that the man who desires to approach the Lord's holy table must believe.

After the Legate had dealt with these matters with a high hand, I have, through the intercession of many, got permission to answer in writing.

And if harshly dealt with by the Legate I purpose publishing my answer to the two propositions, to let all see his ignorance and tactlessness.

For many heretical and extraordinary ideas proceed from his standpoint regarding the two articles.

Although he may be a so-called Thomist, he is a muddle-headed, obscure, and incapable theologian, or Christian, and as incapable as an ass of judging this matter.

So, seeing my affairs are in such jeopardy through having judges who are not only full of enmity and deceit, but unable to understand my cause, I may well tremble. Be this as it may, God the Lord lives and reigns, to whom

¹ Cardinal Cajetan.

I commit all, and have no doubt that help will come through the prayers of God-fearing people. On these I rely as firmly as if they were offered for me alone. Therefore, I shall either return to you uninjured, or seek refuge elsewhere; so farewell. Continue steadfast, and exalt Christ with all confidence.

I enjoy the favour of all men, except those who cleave to the Cardinal, who calls me his dear son, and tells my vicar that I have no better friend than he, and I know he would be highly pleased with me if I would only say, "I recant," but I shall not become a heretic, through the change of opinion by which I became a Christian. I shall sooner die, be burned, banished, and persecuted.

Farewell, dearest sir, and show my letter to our divines, Amsdorf, Philip, etc., so that they may pray for me, also for you.

For your cause too is being discussed here, viz. faith in our Lord Jesus and in the grace of God.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

XXIX

TO CARDINAL THOMAS CAJETAN

Staupitz and Link tried to allay the strife by getting Luther to yield, so Luther wrote this letter to see what abject humility would accomplish.

October 17, 1518.

Highly esteemed in God the Father! I approach you once more, not in person, but in writing. And you will graciously lend me your ear.

Dr. Johann Staupitz has urged me to humble myself, and give up my own opinions, submitting them to the judgment of pious people whose characters are above suspicion, and he has so lauded your fatherly love, that I am convinced that you are anxious to do your utmost for me, and that I may commit myself to your loving care.

I rejoice to hear all this from the messenger, for this man (Staupitz) is worthy of my confidence, for I know no one whom I would more gladly obey.

My beloved brother, Dr. Wenzelaus Link, who studied with me, has also tried to influence me in the same way.

I now confess, honoured father, that I have not been humble enough, and have been too vehement, not treating the superior Bishop with sufficient reverence.

And although I had good cause for all this, I now confess I should have been more gentle, and treated His Eminence with more respect ; but it is done, and I admit that it is not always wise to answer a fool according to his folly, and thus become like him.

I am very sorry for all this now, and plead for mercy, and will point out all this now and again to the people from the pulpit, as I have often done.

And with God's help I shall henceforth be more careful how I speak.

Yes, I am quite ready to think no more about this traffic in Indulgences, and when things have quieted down to return to my repose, but my opponents must also be compelled to keep silence, for it was they who began the whole disturbance, and caused me to interfere in the matter. Your Excellency's submissive son,

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

xxx

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK

Luther left Augsburg October 20, and on November 28 appealed from the Pontiff to a General Council. Even Luther's opponents admit this letter to be a masterpiece of eloquence.

November 29, 1518.

Most Serene and Gracious Lord ! I have received with great joy a pamphlet from my dear friend, George Spalatin, along with a copy of the esteemed Cardinal's letter to you, which gives me an opportunity of explaining all the details of my case to your Electoral Highness.

I merely humbly plead that your Grace would graciously listen to an insignificant, despised mendicant

brother, and take my uncouth relation in good part. (Here follows a particular account of his dealings with the Legate in Augsburg.) Therefore I once more beseech your Electoral Highness not to believe those who declare that Brother Martin said what was not right, and taught what was wrong, without definite proof that this was the case.

St. Peter erred even after he had received the Holy Ghost, so a cardinal can also err no matter how learned he may be.

Therefore your Grace will, I hope, make it a point of conscience and honour that they do not send me to Rome, for this your Electoral Highness could not insist upon, let the man be what he may, for I would not be safe in Rome. If your Grace did this it would be betraying an innocent Christian's blood, and becoming my murderer. Even the Pope is not sure of his life for an hour. They have paper, pen, and ink in Rome, and notaries enough, so it would be easy to write down in what I have erred. It would cost much less to instruct me at a distance than to demand my presence, and make an end of me through their cunning and wiles. One thing vexes me greatly, and that is, that the Legate should sneeringly insinuate that I have acted as I have in reliance upon your Electoral Highness; and some liars among ourselves falsely assert that I undertook the disputation on the Indulgences by your Grace's advice, when the fact is, that not even my dearest friends were aware of it, except the Cardinal of Mayence and the Bishop of Brandenburg.

For I admonished these two, whose office it was to prohibit the scandal, most humbly and respectfully in writing, before I let the disputation come to the light of day.

But now that the Legate is trying to stain your Grace's honour and that of the noble house of Saxony, and bring it into bad repute with His Holiness, I will explain how they go about it. People nowadays believe firmly that Christ is buried, and cannot now speak even through an ass; hence they imagine that His disciples and their

followers will also be obliged to be silent, even should the stones cry out.

Therefore, that no evil may befall your Serene Highness, which I do not wish, I shall leave your Grace's land in God's name, and will go wherever the everlasting and merciful God directs, and shall submit to His divine will, letting Him do with me as He will.

Herewith I bless and greet your Electoral Grace, in deep humility, committing you to the merciful God, and thanking you with all my heart for the benefits you have bestowed upon me. And wherever my dwelling-place may be, I shall never to all eternity forget your Grace's goodness to me, or cease to pray earnestly for your Highness's salvation and prosperity. At present I am full of joy and gratitude to God, that His dear Son counted a poor sinner like me worthy to suffer tribulation and persecution for His good and sacred cause. May He maintain your Electoral Grace to all eternity. Amen. Your Grace's unworthy chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XXXI

TO JOHN REUCHLIN

The great German humanist, who was the first to spread the knowledge of Hebrew in Germany.

December 14, 1518.

The Lord be with you, my valiant hero! I praise the mercy of God, which dwells in you, my learned and esteemed sir, through which you have at length stopped the mouths of those who spoke against you. Certainly you are an instrument of Divine Providence, although you may not know it.

But those who have the cause of sacred learning at heart have for long earnestly desired one such as you, and God's purposes were very different from what your actions would have led people to suppose they were. I was one of those who greatly desired to be with you, but the opportunity never presented itself. Still I have been ever with you, with my wishes and prayers, but what was

not possible for the young comrade has been granted in rich measure to his successor.

I am now being attacked by the Behemoth, who are anxious to avenge upon me the disgrace they have suffered at your hands. Doubtless I am forced to encounter them with much feebler weapons of wit and learning, but with as much courage and delight as you. They will have no dealings with me, so determined are they only to use force against me.

But Christ lives, and I can lose nothing ; for I have nothing. However, the horns of these animals have rather lost effect through your courage. For God has achieved this through you—that the lord of the Sophists has found that the righteousness of God must be met with gentleness, so that Germany, through the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, which, alas, for so many hundred years has been smothered and suppressed, has again begun to breathe. But it is presumptuous of me discussing matters so confidentially with such as you. It is because I am so devoted to you—both for yourself and your books. It was Philip Melanchthon, whom I am proud to call my dearest friend, who persuaded me to write, saying you would not take it amiss, however poor the production might be. So blame him if you do not perceive that it is written to prove my devotion to you. Farewell, my much honoured master.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.

1519

Leo the X. now sent his chamberlain, Karl von Miltitz, to gain over Luther, and they met in Spalatin's house in Altenburg. His Holiness also sent the "Golden Rose" to the Elector Frederick by Miltitz, who persuaded Luther to write a conciliatory letter to the Pope.

XXXII

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK

Luther narrates negotiations with von Miltitz, whom the Pope had sent to convert this son of Satan.

January 1519.

Most Serene High-born Prince, Most Gracious Lord. It is really too bad that your Electoral Highness should have so much annoyance through being involved with my affairs; but seeing necessity and God have willed it so, I beseech you graciously to take it in good part. Herr Karl von Miltitz pointed out yesterday the disgrace and disturbance which have accrued to the Roman Church through me, and I have offered to do all I can to atone for it. So I beg you to ponder the matter, as I wish to do something.

To begin with, I shall do nothing more in the affair, and let it, so to speak, bleed to death (if the other party are also silent), for, if my writings had been allowed to circulate freely, the whole thing would have died a natural death long ere now, for all are sick of it. So see to it, for if this precaution be neglected, the matter may assume alarming proportions, and disgrace ensue. For my weapons are ready. Therefore I deem it best that there should be a truce.

In the second place, I shall write His Holiness, and submit humbly to him, confessing that in the past I have been too vehement, although I did not intend to injure the Church, but only to show the true reason of my opposition, in combating, as a faithful son of the Church, the blasphemous teaching which has occasioned so much mischief, and aroused the general indignation against the Roman See.

In addition, I shall issue a pamphlet exhorting the people to cleave to the Roman Church, and be obedient and respectful, and not consider this writing as tending to disgrace the Holy Roman Church, but rather to exalt her; and I shall also admit that I expressed the truth in a too vehement manner, and perhaps at an inopportune time. In the fourth place, Magister Spalatin has proposed that the matter be referred to the verdict of the Archbishop of Salzburg, along with other learned people, whose reputation is above suspicion, while I keep to my appeal. But I fear the Pope will not put up with a judge, and I, too, will not submit to the Pope's verdict.

So, if the first means fail, then the result will be, that the Pope will draw up the conditions, and I shall supply the glossary thereto. This would not be good.

I have also talked it over with Karl von Miltitz, who does not think this would suffice, yet does not demand a revocation, but wishes all to express an opinion on the question under discussion.

If your Grace thinks I can do anything more, will you graciously tell me how to act? I shall gladly do or suffer anything that I may not again have to enter the arena of conflict. For nothing will come of the revocation. Your Electoral Highness's obedient chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER.

XXXIII

TO HERZOG GEORGE OF SAXONY

The vehement enemy of Luther and the Reformation, which seemed to him like revolution.

February 19, 1519.

My poor prayers are ever at the service of your Royal Highness, Most Serene High-born Prince, Most Gracious Lord! The worthy Dr. John Eck¹ writes that he has besought your Grace, graciously to permit a disputation in Leipsic, in your Grace's University there, with the excellent Carlstadt.² But seeing Dr. Eck professes to desire the disputation with Dr. Carlstadt, whose opinions he has scarcely attacked, while he has combated my doctrines with all his might, I shall appear myself in defence of my propositions, or to receive instructions in the better way.

Therefore, I humbly request your Grace, out of love for the truth, to allow this disputation.

For the highly esteemed gentlemen of the University have just written me, that they have promised Dr. John Eck (which I had heard) to refuse my request.

They accuse me of having made known that a disputation was to be held before I received your Grace's

¹ Professor in Ingolstadt.

² Professor in Wittenberg.

permission thereto, but my excuse must be, that I hoped I would not be denied what Dr. Eck was boasting had been already granted to him.

I plead that your Grace will graciously forgive my offence.

May God mercifully spare and uphold your Highness. Amen. Your Electoral Grace's obedient chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XXXIV

TO CHRISTOPH SCHEURL

February 20, 1519.

My greeting! I often reproach myself, my excellent Herr Doctor, for writing so seldom, having received so many kind messages from you. But my excuse must again be the mass of work which weighs me down.

Up till now our Eck has been able to restrain his wrath against me, but now he is letting it have full scope.

God alone, who is in the midst of the gods, knows what will be the outcome of this conduct. Neither Eck nor I am working for ourselves alone. It seems to me as if all this proceeded solely from the will of God. I often say that up till now it has only been child's play.

But from henceforth I must proceed in earnest against the Roman pontiff and Romish pride.

I commend to you, most warmly and in all unselfishness, Udalrich, our Pindar, that excellent and learned man. You will try to help him, seeing he is your compatriot, and speak highly of him to your counsellors—perhaps they may deem him worthy of some assistance.

We hear that the Suabian league is rebelling against the Duke of Würtemberg. Melancholy outlook!

May God not rebuke us in His wrath, but chasten us according to His tender mercy. Amen! Greet all our friends. I herewith commend you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER,

Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

XXXV

TO POPE LEO X.

Luther's conciliatory letter to the Pope.

March 3, 1519.

Most Holy Father. Necessity once more compels me, the most unworthy and despicable creature upon earth, to address your Holiness. Therefore, would you, in Christ's stead, graciously bend your fatherly ear to the petition of me, your poor sheep. The esteemed Herr Karl von Miltitz, your Holiness's treasurer, has been here, and complained bitterly to the Elector Frederick, in your Holiness's name, of my insolence towards the Roman Church and your Holiness, and demanded a recantation from me.

When I heard this I felt aggrieved that all my efforts to do honour to the Roman Church had been so misrepresented, and considered foolhardiness and deliberate malice by the Head of the Church.

But what shall I do, most holy father? I am quite at sea, being unable to bear the weight of your Holiness's wrath or to escape from it. I am asked to recant and withdraw my theses. If by so doing I could accomplish the end desired, I would not hesitate a moment.

But my writings have become far too widely known, and taken root in too many hearts—beyond my highest expectations—now to be summarily withdrawn. Nay, our German nation, with its cultured and learned men, in the bloom of an intellectual reawakening, understands this question so thoroughly that, on this account, I must avoid even the appearance of recantation, much as I honour and esteem the Roman Church in other respects. For such a recantation would only bring it into still worse repute, and make every one speak against it.

It is those, O holy father, who have done the greatest injury to the Church in Germany, and whom I have striven to oppose—those who, by their foolish preaching and their insatiable greed, have brought your name into bad odour, sullyng the sanctity of the sacred chair, and making

it an offence ; and it is they who, in revenge for my having rendered their godless endeavours abortive, accuse me to your Holiness as the originator of their plots. Now, holy father, I declare before God that I have never had the slightest wish to attack the power of the Roman Church or your Holiness in any way, or even to injure it through cunning. Yes, I declare openly, that there is nothing in heaven or on earth which can come before the power of this Church, except Jesus Christ alone—Lord over all. Therefore do not believe those malicious slanderers who speak otherwise of Luther. I also gladly promise to let the question of Indulgences drop and be silent, if my opponents restrain their boastful, empty talk. In addition, I shall publish a pamphlet exhorting the people to honour the Holy Church, and not ascribe such foolish misdeeds to her, or imitate my own severity, in which I have gone too far towards her, and by so doing I trust these divisions may be healed. For this one thing I desired, that the Roman Church, our mother,¹ should not be sullied through the greed of strangers, nor the people led into error, being taught to regard love as of less importance than the Indulgences. All else, seeing it neither helps nor injures, I regard of less importance.

If I can do anything more in the matter I am willing to do it. May the Lord Christ preserve your Holiness to all eternity.

MARTIN LUTHER,

Doctor.

ALTENBURG.

XXXVI

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK OF SAXONY

Luther excuses himself for his discussion with Eck.

March 13, 1519.

My poor prayers are always at the service of your Grace, Most Serene High-born Prince, Most Gracious Lord.

God knows that I was most anxious that the game

¹ Luther still professes to be a son of the Church, whose yoke he soon after throws off.

should be at an end. So eager was I for this, that I kept my agreement, even after your Electoral Highness's chaplain, Herr Magister Spalatin, forwarded some points to me, at the instigation of the Pope's commissioner, Herr Karl von Miltitz, and I left Herr Sylvester Prierat's reply unanswered, although there was much in it which would have been a good pretext for breaking my resolution ; but I refrained from doing so, even against the advice of my friends—therefore our agreement made at Altenburg has not been broken—that I would be silent, if my opponents would also be silent, and this Herr Karl knows.

But now that Dr. Eck thus attacks me without any provocation, seeking not only to disgrace me, but the whole University of Wittenberg, it is not right that I should disregard such cunningly devised assaults, and permit the truth to be held in derision. For, should my mouth be bound, while every one else is free to speak, your Electoral Highness can well believe that I shall expose myself to all manner of attacks from those who might otherwise not have presumed to raise their eyes towards me. I am still inclined to follow your Grace's counsel and be silent, if others will do the same, for I have other things to occupy me, and find no pleasure in such dissension.

But if this be not possible, I beg your Grace not to be displeased with me, for my conscience will not allow me to leave the truth in the lurch. For although in my disputation with Eck I shall have to dispute the assertion that the Church of Rome is superior to all others, I shall do so with the reservation of full submission and obedience to the Holy See. May God graciously spare your Electoral Highness. Amen. Your Electoral Highness's most humble chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustini. m.

WITTENBERG.

XXXVII

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK THE WISE

Luther begs to be allowed to build an addition to the cloister, and pleads for two cows.

May 1519.

Most Gracious Lord. We are compelled to build an addition to our cloister. We humbly begged the councillors to do this, but have received no answer.

Therefore we pray that your Grace will graciously grant our request. I also beseech your Electoral Grace to present me at the Leipsic Fair with a white and a black cowl.

Your Grace owes me the black cowl, and I humbly plead for the white one. For two or three years ago your Highness promised me one, and I have never received it, although Pfeffinger agreed to it, but perhaps he has been deterred by other matters, or has delayed doing so, as people say he is very unwilling to spend money. At any rate I had to procure one, so up till now your Grace's promise remains unfulfilled. In my present need I now humbly beg for one—if the Psalter¹ merits a black cowl, and if the Apostle² be worthy of a white one. Please let me have it, but do not depend again on Pfeffinger giving it.—Your Electoral Grace's obedient chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian at Wittenberg.

XXXVIII

TO MARTIN GLASER, PRIOR IN AUGUSTINIAN CLOISTER
IN RANZAU

Luther tells his friend of his proposed disputation with Eck over the Pope's supremacy, which lasted from June 25 till July 15. In June Charles V. was elected Emperor of Germany.

May 30, 1519.

To my beloved friend in the Lord. You, above all, have a good right to marvel, nay, to be offended, most honoured father, that up till now I have not sent you a single line. Although I am not without excuse for thus acting, I shall rather confess my fault. Concerning your horse, I hope, through the mediation of our esteemed vicar, you will have mercy on me. For, without doubt,

¹ Expounded by Luther, and dedicated to the Elector.

² Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

you presented it to God, and not to me. I was delighted to hear from our vicar that we are soon to have the pleasure of seeing you here again. I fancy you have already heard of my proposed disputation at Leipsic, and other things as well. I am lecturing upon the Psalms for the second time, and with good results. The town is crowded with students, and Rome is longing for my downfall; while I laugh at their malice. I hear that the paper Martin has been publicly burned there, and openly cursed and condemned. I anticipate their wrath.

The Epistle to the Galatians is now actually in the press—you will see it in a few days. In other respects we are peaceful and contented here, and not so badly off as formerly. Our Heldt looks after things well, but only kitchen matters, for he is always much concerned as to what he is to eat and drink, and will continue so. I have read what you wrote me about the tattler M——, but I am used to the sting of envy. The whole world seems to be in motion, both physically and morally, and what the outcome will be God alone knows. I predict murders and wars. God have mercy on us. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze, v. 1.)

XXXIX

TO THOMAS FISCHER, PREACHER IN MILAU

Luther says how despisers of the gospel should be treated.

August 26, 1519.

Grace and peace to my beloved brother in the Lord! Regarding what you have written to me, my dear man of God, about these godless scorners—this is my opinion. Even as no one can be compelled to accept the gospel, so no magistrate must suffer any one to traduce it, but, if any one do so, the magistrate must have him up and admonish him, and hear his reasons for acting as he does. If he can give none, then he must be bound over to silence, so that the seeds of dissension may not be sown. For whoever will speak against it must do so openly—

the magistrate being called upon to put down all private disputes with all his authority. This is how we do in Wittenberg, and counsel others to do the same. From this you will see that the magistracy dare not tolerate what you speak of in the community. For it is nothing short of a secret scandal. Therefore call them out to the light of day, so that they may either justify themselves or be vanquished.

Along with the Decalogue and the Catechism, inculcate civil (*bürgerliche*) and domestic virtues, and these ought most frequently to be the subject topics of preaching, and the people be compelled to attend, so that they may be instructed as to the duties of a subject and social life, whether they approve of the gospel or not, to prevent them becoming a stone of stumbling to others, by deliberately setting at naught political laws. For if they live in a community they must learn the laws of the same and obey them, even against their will. And they must do this, not only on account of their possessions, but for the sake of their family. Christ, who will sustain you, will teach you all else.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

1520

This year Luther issued the three great Reformation treatises: I. "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation." II. "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church." III. "Concerning Christian Liberty," or "The Freedom of a Christian Man."

XL

TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.

Luther places himself under Charles's protection as being the defender of truth and righteousness.

January 15, 1520.

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ! Doubtless every one marvels, most gracious Emperor, that I presume to write your Imperial Majesty. For what is so unusual as that the King of kings and Lord of lords

should be addressed by the meanest of men? But whoever can estimate the enormous importance of this subject, which so intimately concerns the divine verities, will not wonder.

For, if it be worthy of being brought before the throne of His Majesty, how much more before that of an earthly prince; for even as earthly princes are an emblem of the heavenly, so it becomes them to follow their great example: viz. to look from their heights upon the lowly of the earth, and "raise the poor out of the dust, and lift the beggar from the dunghill."

Therefore, I, poor miserable creature, throw myself at your Imperial Majesty's feet as the most unworthy being who ever brought forward a matter of such importance.

Several small books I wrote drew down the envy and hatred of many great people, instead of their gratitude, which I merit: (1) Because against my will I had to come forward, although I had no desire to write anything, had not my opponents, through guile and force, compelled me to do so. For I wish I could have remained hidden in my corner. (2) As my conscience and many pious people can testify, I only brought forward the gospel in opposition to the illusions or delusions of human traditions. And for so doing, I have suffered for three years, without cessation, all the malice which my adversaries could heap upon me. It was of no avail that I pled for mercy and promised henceforth to be silent. No attention was paid to my efforts after peace, and my urgent request to be better instructed was not listened to.

The one thing they insisted upon was, that I, with the whole gospel, should be extinguished. Therefore seeing all my labour lost, I appealed to the example of St. Athanasius, to see if perhaps God might not, through your Imperial Majesty, support His cause. Hence, O lord, prince of the kings of the earth, I fall humbly at your Serene Majesty's feet, begging you will not take me, but the cause of divine truth (for which cause only God has put the sword into your hand) under the shadow of your wings, protecting me till I have either won or lost the cause.

Should I then be declared a heretic I ask for no protection, and only plead that neither the truth nor the lie be condemned unheard. For this is only due to your Imperial throne. This will adorn your Majesty's empire! It will consecrate your century, and cause its memory never to be forgotten, if your Sacred Majesty do not permit the wicked to swallow up him who is holier than they, nor let men, as the prophet says, "become as the fishes of the sea—as the creeping things that have no ruler over them!"

I herewith commend myself to you, hoping for all that is good from your Sacred Majesty, whom may the Lord Jesus preserve to us, and highly exalt to the everlasting honour of His gospel. Amen. Your Imperial Majesty's devoted servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XLI

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK OF SAXONY

Luther dedicates a little book of consolation to the Elector, for the comfort of believers under disappointment.

February 1520.

Most Serene Lord. Our beloved Saviour has commanded us to visit the sick, liberate the prisoner, and perform works of mercy towards our neighbour, even as our Lord Himself set the example of marvellous love, in descending from the Almighty Father's bosom, to share our captivity, and take our sins and weaknesses upon Himself.

Whoever despises this most blessed type and command will at the last day hear the words, "Go into everlasting fire: I was sick, and ye did not visit me."

This is my apology for compiling this small book, so that I may not be accused of ingratitude in being unable to recognise my Lord Jesus' image, in the illness with which your Electoral Highness has been smitten by my Lord God, and I cannot pretend not to hear God's voice from the person of your Grace, which says, "I am sick."

For when a Christian is ill, it is not he alone who suffers, but Christ our Saviour, in whom the Christian man lives. As Christ Himself says, "What you have done unto the least of my disciples ye have done unto me." And although this command of Christ refers to the whole human brotherhood—still, it is specially applicable to our brothers in the faith, and above all, must be exercised towards our friends and relatives.

Besides, it is incumbent upon me, with all your Grace's subjects, to sympathise in all your afflictions, as our head on whom all our prosperity depends.

But I, who for many reasons am entitled to look upon you as my protector, could, in my poverty, find nothing worthy of your acceptance, till my dearest friend, George Spalatin, put it into my head to prepare you a little book of spiritual consolation drawn from the Holy Scriptures.

Therefore I present this booklet (*Tafel*) to your Grace, which is divided into fourteen chapters. It is not a tablet of silver, but a spiritual one, not to be placed in the churches, but in the heart.

The first part consists of seven meditations upon evil, trial, and disappointment; the second part also contains seven meditations—upon prosperity and things pertaining thereto.

May your Electoral Grace, with your usual princely benignity, graciously receive this my little treatise. And I humbly commend myself to you. Your Electoral Grace's humble servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

XLII

TO HERZOG JOHN OF SAXONY

Encouraged by the Elector's gracious acceptance of his little book, Luther dedicated his large German treatise, *Sermon on Good Works*, to his brother Prince John.

March 29, 1520.

Most Serene High-born Prince, Gracious Sir. My humble service and poor prayers are ever at your Grace's disposal.

For long I have wished to show my devotion to your Grace by offering you some of my spiritual wares ; but always thought them too insignificant for your Highness's acceptance. But seeing my gracious lord, Frederick, Herzog of Saxony, and Marshal of the Holy Roman Empire, etc., your Grace's brother, received my little book so graciously, I presume once more on the royal blood, trusting you will not disdain my humble offering, which I consider the most important of all my small books—such a commotion having arisen on the great question of good works, through which more deception is being practised and more simple people are being led astray than by any other means.

And our Lord Jesus has commanded us to "beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

Although I know that many despise my poverty, and say I only make little books and sermons for the unlearned laity, I am not upset by this. Would to God that I had devoted my whole life to the improvement of one layman—I would have thanked God, and let my books perish. I leave others to judge if writing many large books is a science, and tends to the improvement of Christendom. If I desired to write large books, perhaps with the Divine help I could do so, with better results than they could imitate me in writing a little treatise. If we cannot all be poets, we would all like to be judges. Gladly do I leave the honour of accomplishing great things to others, and am not ashamed of writing and preaching German for the unlearned, although not very qualified to do so. And it seems to me that if we had done this hitherto Christendom would have derived no little advantage therefrom, much more than it has reaped from the large books and learned discussions in the universities. Besides, I have neither asked nor compelled any one to read my works.

I have served the people freely with what God has given me, and whoever does not care for this can read something else, which would not distress me greatly. For it is more than enough if some of the laity, in-

cluding those of high rank, demean themselves to read my sermons. And if for no other reason, this is sufficient, that your Grace appreciates such little books, being anxious to know more about good works and faith, and it behoves me to be as useful as possible to you in this matter.

Therefore, I humbly beg your Highness will graciously accept my good intentions, till, if God give me the time, I shall publish an exposition of faith in German. On this occasion I have tried to show how faith must be exercised in all good works, and how it is the best work of all.

Again, if God will, I shall discuss the question of faith, and how we should daily pray and practise the same. I herewith commend myself to your Grace. Your Grace's obedient chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.

XLIII

TO NICOLAS VON AMSDORF

Luther's friend Amsdorf was Professor in Wittenberg, and later Bishop of Naumburg.

June 23, 1520.

The grace and peace of God ! Honoured dear sir. The time to be silent is past, and the time to speak has come, as we read in Ecclesiastes. I have put together some observations, as we agreed upon, to place before the Christian nobility, to see if God will help the Church through the laity, seeing the clergy, whose duty it is, have become indifferent. I send this to your Excellence for approval, and, if need be, correction. I know that I, poor despised creature, will be accused of presumption in haranguing such exalted people upon such weighty matters, as if there were no other than Dr. Martin Luther to espouse the cause of Christianity and give advice to such learned men. Perhaps it was decreed I should one day commit a folly in the eyes of God and the world, and this is the time I have chosen, and if I succeed, I may at length become Court fool, for I must verify the saying, "A monk must be present at whatever is being done in

the world." More than once a fool has uttered wise sayings, and wise people have often talked foolishly, as St. Paul says, "Whoever will be wise in this world, let him become a fool." So, seeing I am not only a fool, but a sworn doctor of divinity, I am happy to fulfil my oath in this foolish fashion.

Please apologise to those of ordinary understanding for me, for I do not know how to gain the favour of the intellectual, which I was wont long ago to desire so eagerly, but which I now despise.

God help us not to seek our own, but solely His glory. Amen. In Augustinian cloister.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XLIV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther heard from von Schaumburg that one hundred Franconian knights were ready to defend him.

July 10, 1520.

I herewith send the letter of the Franconian knight, Sylvester von Schaumburg, and should like it alluded to in the Prince's letter to Cardinal St. Georgio, so that they may know, that although they banish me from Wittenberg with their ban they will only make bad worse.

For, even in Bohemia, there are people who will protect me, if I am exiled, against the enemy's thunderbolts. And then with such protection I might attack the Papacy still more vehemently than I can from my theological chair in the Prince's domain. Unless God prevent, this will happen. So let them know that the reason I have not yet attacked them is solely due to my great respect for the Prince and the interests of the students in the University.

For me the die is cast, and I despise Rome's displeasure as much as her favour. I shall never be reconciled to her, let her condemn or burn me as she will! But if I can get a fire I shall publicly burn the whole Papal code, this serpentine piece of treachery, and make an end of the humility I have hitherto displayed in vain,

so that the enemies of the gospel may no longer vaunt themselves on account of it.

The more I think of the Cardinal's letter the more I despise those who, through cowardice and an evil conscience, breathe out defiance with their last breath, trying to hide their ignorance through violence. But the Lord, who knows I am a wicked sinner, will conduct His cause through me, or some one else. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XLV

TO HERR WITTIGER, CANON IN BRESLAU

July 30, 1520.

At first I had no intention of writing you, most excellent sir, as Herr Schleupper, our common friend, could tell you everything better than I. For he knows all that is going on, only he insisted I should send a line, so I obey. A great many pamphlets are being issued against me in Germany and Italy, but it does not put me about, for they are written by the most stupid of the stupid, who affront themselves through their work. I am pretty well in body and mind, only I should like to sin less, and yet I sin more and more every day.

The faction of the Dominicans are now keeping quiet, for they were forbidden writing against me, but their place has been filled by the Bishop of Bavaria.

If they overcome, they do so through coarseness and audacity. I never read such stuff, for they do not mind whether they win or lose. How sad for the people who have such wolves set over them ! But the Lord sees it, in whom may you find refuge. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XLVI

TO JOHN LANGE

Staupitz, Lange, and Link all begged Luther to suppress his dangerous book, *To the German Nobility*, but it was already in the press.

August 18, 1520.

If my little book, that you, my father, name a trumpet (*Posaune*), is really so fierce, I leave you and others to judge. No doubt it is vehement and fearless, but it pleases many, and is not displeasing to our Court! I am no judge in this matter. Perhaps I am the forerunner of our Philip, whose way I am sent to prepare.

We firmly believe here that the Papacy is the personification of Antichrist's throne, and feel we are justified in resisting their deceptions and wiles for the sake of the salvation of souls. I declare that I only owe the Pope the obedience due to Antichrist.

Philip is marrying Catherine Crappin, and I am blamed for promoting it. I did it for his good, and do not let the outcry disturb me. May God give His blessing.

I hate men's sins, and abhor the child of destruction, with all his kingdom of sin and hypocrisy. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XLVII

TO HERMANN TULICH, PROFESSOR IN WITTENBERG

Luther dedicates his treatise on the Babylonian Captivity to Tulich.

October 6, 1520.

Whether I will or not I am becoming more learned daily, as the esteemed doctors, time about, insist upon my taking up the cudgels. Two years ago I wrote on the Indulgences, and now that the book is out I regret it.

For then I was steeped in superstition, and thought the Indulgence not to be despised, as I saw so many enlightened men take it.

But later, thanks to Sylvester and his comrades, I saw the Indulgence was only pure deception of the Papal flatterers through which faith in God was destroyed.

Therefore I would like the printers, and those who have read the little book, to destroy it, and read instead what I have written on this subject. Eck and Emser

opened my eyes as to the Pope's sovereignty; for although at first I maintained his right to the human title, I now see that the Papacy is the kingdom of Babylon, and the tyranny of Nimrod, the mighty hunter. I must now go and lecture on giving the sacramental cup to the laity, and deny the seven sacraments, retaining only three—Baptism, Repentance, and the Lord's Supper, in all which the Roman Court has imposed a miserable captivity upon the Church. The Indulgence is sheer tyranny of the Roman flatterers.

MARTIN LUTHER.

XLVIII

TO POPE LEO X

Luther had seen the Papal bull condemning him. He sent the book on the *Freedom of a Christian Man* to the Pope.

October 13, 1520.

To the Most Holy Father in God, Leo X., Pope in Rome, all blessedness in Christ Jesus our Lord! In consequence of the disputes in which I have been embroiled for three years, through some worthless men, I have had occasion to look towards you, as it is thought you are the cause of this dissension. For although I have been driven by some of our godless flatterers to appeal from your Holiness's judgment to a general Christian Council, still I have never been so alienated from you that I did not pray earnestly for the welfare of the Roman See. And I declare I am not aware of ever having spoken of you except with great respect. I have called you Daniel in Babylon, and any one can tell you how I stood up for your innocence against your defamer, Prierias. Your good name has been far too highly lauded by eminent men everywhere, to make it possible for any one to attack it, however high he may be, so I am not fool enough to belittle him whom every one praises. No doubt I have eagerly attacked my opponents for their unchristian teaching; and in this I have Christ's example, who speaks of His enemies as

serpents, "Ye fools and blind"; and St. Paul says, "Children of the devil, full of all subtilty and all mischief," and some false prophets he names "dogs" and "deceivers," etc.

Were any fastidious people nowadays to hear such language they would say, "No one was so bitter as the Apostle Paul." And who are more so than the prophets?—Jeremiah cursing the man who doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully.

Therefore, most holy father Leo, pray accept my apology, and be assured I never attacked your person, although I confess to having spoken against the Roman See, the Court of Rome, which not even thyself can deny, that it has been a very Sodom, Gomorrha, and Babylon, and is, so far as I can see, in a hopeless state.

Meantime, thou sittest, most holy father, like a sheep among wolves, and like Daniel in the lions' den, and Ezekiel among scorpions. What canst thou do against such like? And even if there be three or four pious and learned Cardinals, what are they among so many? God's wrath lies upon the Court of Rome, for it will not submit to a General Council, nor to counsel or reform, so what was predicted of her mother may be fulfilled in her, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed," etc. It should be thy work, and that of the Cardinals, to put an end to this miserable state of things; but the malady defies the remedies, the horse and carriage pay no heed to the driver. I have ever regretted, thou pious Leo, that thou shouldst now be Pope, when thou wert worthy of better times. The Roman See is not worthy of thee—the Evil Spirit should be Pope, who rules more than thou in this Babel. Oh that thou wert free, and could live from thy paternal inheritance! Such a post should be reserved for Judas Iscariot and such like, whom God has cast away. The Roman Court surpasses that of Turkey in wickedness. Once it was a gate of heaven, now it is the very jaws of hell. This is why I have attacked it so mercilessly, most holy Leo!

And my efforts not having been vain, the Evil Spirit raised up John Eck, a special enemy of the truth, and

persuaded him to draw me unawares into a disputation at Leipsic, about a word I dropped as to the Papacy—and all under the pretext of disputing with Dr. Carlstadt. And then at Augsburg, when Cajetan, to whom I committed my cause, dealt so unjustly with me, and after him came Karl von Miltitz, also sent by your Holiness, who, after much running to and fro, tried to arrange matters, and it is at his request, and at that of the Augustinian fathers, who will not believe the cause is lost, if the holy father Leo would stretch out his hand to help, that I now write to your Holiness. I long for peace that I may have quiet to devote to better studies. I now plead that a limit may be set to the flatterers, the enemies of all peace. It is needless to ask me to retract, for I will not, nor can I suffer any interference with my expositions of Scripture; because the Word of God must not be bound. If this be conceded I am ready to do and suffer anything. Therefore, most holy father, do not listen to the sweet music of those who tell thee thou art not a mere man, but a mixture of God and man, who has everything at his disposal.

This is not the case. Thou art not lord over all. For a Pope in whose heart Christ does not reign, instead of being Christ's vicegerent—is Antichrist. Perhaps it is presumptuous of me to try to teach so exalted a personage, but I do it from pure love and a sense of duty, for my neighbour's good, and in this I follow St. Bernard's example, when he gave his book to Pope Eugene—a book every Pope should read.

In conclusion, and not to come empty handed before your Holiness, I bring a little book, which came out with the sanction of your name, in the fervent hope that it might be the beginning of better times, and to let your Holiness see the sort of profitable work I love to pursue, if your flatterers would give me leisure. It is a tiny book (*The Freedom of a Christian Man*) in respect of paper, but it contains the whole kernel of a Christian life. I am poor, and have nothing else by which I can show my devotion to your Holiness, but thou requirest only spiritual wares for your higher welfare. I herewith commend

myself to your Holiness, and may Jesus keep you to all eternity. Amen.

Luther does not sign this, his third letter to the Pope, evidently not wishing the consideration due to an Augustinian monk to be taken into account.

XLIX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther rejoices that Spalatin at length sees one cannot rely on man. The Pope's Bull reached Wittenberg on October 11.

November 4, 1520.

Salvation ! I wonder how it is, my dear Spalatin, that you do not get my letters, for I have written twice and got no answer. I am glad you now see that the Germans' hopes are in vain, and that you are learning not to trust in princes, and are disregarding the world's judgment whether it praises or condemns my cause. If the gospel could be promoted or maintained by worldly powers God would not have committed it to fishermen.

No, my dear Spalatin, it is not the work of the princes and high priests of this world to protect the Word of God—therefore I crave no one's protection, for they would rather require to help one another against the Lord and His Christ.

But I am sorry for those who have heard and known God's Word, for they cannot, without risking everlasting perdition, deny or forsake the same, and it is much to be feared that many, with ourselves, may be found among them—therefore let us pray for courage.

It is very hard to be of a different opinion from all the bishops and princes, but it is the only way to avoid God's wrath and hell.

I would, if you did not so press me, commit the whole business to God, so that He might arrange matters according to the counsel of His will.

Do what the Spirit bids you, and farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

WITTENBERG.

L

TO JOHN LANGE

Luther determined to stand by his appeal from an ill-informed to a better-instructed Pope, in spite of Herzog George.

November 28, 1520.

To the honoured John Lange, Doctor of the Holy Scriptures in Erfurt, my friend in the Lord.

My greeting! We rejoice over our Prince's return, and I beseech you, honoured father, to pray for our cause. Herzog George is foolish—very mad. We duly expect thunder and lightning from that quarter. I am determined to stand by the appeal. I see troublous times ahead. May God direct all well! We have read your Prince's learned and judicious answer to the Papal delegates, Aleander and Marinus, from which we see they have achieved nothing in that quarter. I shall send them to you soon. This Aleander has been mercilessly attacked in a witty lampoon because of his many vices. My writings have been burned in Cologne and Louvain.

Farewell in the Lord. Our father vicar has set off for Strenberg, under the escort of the lay brother Johannes.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

LI

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

The Emperor wrote to the Elector, asking him to bring Luther with him to Worms, to be judged by learned men. On 10th December Luther burned the Pope's Bull at the Elster gate, Wittenberg, in presence of hundreds of students, who flung Eck and Emser's works into the flames, and then sang the "Te Deum."

December 21, 1520.

You ask what I shall do if the Emperor demands my presence. If I am summoned, I declare I shall be borne thither sick, if I am not well enough to go, for if the Emperor call me, doubtless it is God's call.

But if they use force towards me, which is probable, for they will not summon me in order to be enlightened, then the cause must be committed to God, who still reigns

—to Him who upheld the three youths in the king of Babylon's fiery furnace. But if He will not deliver me, then my head is of no importance compared to the shameful death which was meted out to Christ. For, in a matter such as this, neither danger nor prosperity must be considered,—for we must only see that the gospel is not turned into ridicule by the godless through our conduct—or that our opponents should be able to boast that we had not the heart to confess, nor the courage to shed our blood, for the doctrines we taught. May the merciful Jesus guard us from such cowardice, and them from such boasting.

We cannot know whether our life or death may be most beneficial to the gospel. You know that the truth of God is a rock of offence set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. We have only to pray God that Charles's reign may not be desecrated through the shedding of my blood, or any one else's, and as I have often said, I would rather perish in Papal hands than have him and his entangled in this matter. I know the misfortunes that befell the Emperor Sigismund through Huss's murder. He never after had any prosperity—dying without children—and his name blotted out, while his consort Barbara became a reproach among queens. But if it be decreed that I am to be delivered, not only to the high priests, but to the heathen, the will of the Lord be done. Amen.

This is my opinion and counsel. You can fancy anything of me but flight or recantation. I shall not flee, and much less recant, if the Lord Jesus give me the power thereto. For I could do neither without danger to holiness and the welfare of many souls. Farewell, and be strong in the Lord. Wittenberg, on St. Thomas the Martyr's day, as many believe.

MARTIN LUTHER.

1521

This is the year of Luther's grand appearance at Worms, after which the Elector had him spirited away to the Wartburg, where he began his greatest work, the translation of the Bible.

LII

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK OF SAXONY

January 25, 1521.

Most Gracious Lord and Patron, Most Serene Prince! My poor prayers and most humble service are ever at your Grace's disposal. Having been informed, through your Highness, of the opinions and intentions of His Roman, Imperial, and Spanish Majesty regarding my affairs, I offer His Majesty and your Electoral Grace my most humble thanks, and rejoice that His Majesty will espouse the cause which, if God will, is that of God, a universal Christendom, and of the whole German nation, and not that of a single man, much less mine. Therefore I am still ready to do or leave undone all that is consistent with the glory of God and a Christian's honour, or whatever the Holy Scriptures command. So I humbly beseech your Grace to beg His Majesty to provide me with a safe-conduct against all violence, and to command that the matter may get a judicial hearing before learned Christian men, lay and clerical, whose characters are above suspicion, and who are well grounded in the Bible, knowing how to distinguish divine from human laws, and that these men may be forbidden to proceed against me till it has been proved that I have acted wrong. And as a worldly head of a sacred Christendom is to preside over this Assembly, my opponents the Papists must meantime cease raging against me in such an unchristian manner, laying snares for my honour and life, before I am refuted or even tried. So, although hitherto my anxiety has been mainly to save the honour of the gospel rather than my unworthy self, I hope I shall henceforth be excused if I use means for my own protection, as well as for the safety of the Divine Word. To enable me to do this, I look confidently to the protection of the Emperor and your Electoral Highness.

For I am ready, whenever I get a safe-conduct, to appear at the Diet of Worms before learned, pious, and upright judges, so that all may see I have not acted

thoughtlessly, or sought worldly honour or my own advantage, but obeyed conscience, as a humble teacher of the Holy Scriptures, to the praise of God, and for the salvation of a common Christianity, the good of the German nation, and the deliverance of a united Christendom out of an abyss of tyrannical narrowness and blasphemy against the Most High.

That your Electoral Highness, along with His Imperial Majesty, may extend a loving, watchful eye over the troubled condition of Christendom, is ever my earnest prayer, as is only the duty of a poor humble chaplain and subject. At Wittenberg. On the day of St. Paul's conversion. Your Electoral Grace's obedient chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

LIII

TO JOHN STAUPITZ

The Pope accused Staupitz to the Archbishop of Salzburg of being an adherent of Luther, and Staupitz agreed to submit to the Archbishop's verdict.

February 9, 1521.

I rejoice that you have been assailed by Pope Leo X., and can now let the world see how the cross which you have so often preached to others may be borne. For I do not desire that wolf to derive more satisfaction from your too complaisant answer than he should receive, else he would fancy that you have repudiated me and mine when you suffer him to be umpire. Therefore, if you love Christ, may this letter lead you to recant, for all you have preached and taught up till now of the mercy of God is condemned in this Bull.

And it appears to me that as you are well aware of this, you cannot, without insulting Christ, appoint one of His opponents as judge—one whom you see emptying the vials of his wrath against the word of grace,—for it was your duty to rebuke him for such godlessness.

This is no time for cowardice, but for raising the alarm when we see our Lord Jesus slandered and condemned.

Hence, as you admonish me to humility, so much the more would I exhort you to pride. For, you are far too humble, while I am too proud. This is a serious matter.

When we see the beloved Saviour, who gave Himself for us, being held up to derision everywhere, ought we not to fight for Him, and offer up our necks for Him?

My dear father. The danger is greater than many suppose. The gospel begins thus: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

I would not be ashamed of being accused of any vices, or being called an enemy of the Pope, if no one can accuse me of keeping a godless silence when the Lord cries: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Ps. cxlii. 4). For I hope, through the power of such a testimony, to be purified from all my sins. And this is why I have so joyfully showed the horns against this Roman idol and true Antichrist. For the Word of God is not one of peace, but of the sword! Behold the simple teaching the wise! I write this in all good faith to you; for I much fear that you will hover in suspense between Christ and the Pope, although they are at open defiance with each other. But let us pray that the Lord Jesus may destroy this child of perdition with the breath of His mouth! So if you do not follow now, let me go on alone. If God will, I shall not be silent as to this monstrosity.

Your declension has indeed vexed me not a little, and showed me another Staupitz than he who was wont to preach free grace and the cross. Had you acted thus before you knew of this Bull and Christ's reproach, it would not have grieved me so. Von Hutten and many others write boldly on my behalf, and songs are being daily produced which will certainly not be cause of rejoicing to that Babel. Our Prince is not only acting judiciously and believingly, but is also steadfast. Philip¹

¹ Melancthon.

sends greeting, and wishes you a greater and more joyous spirit. Please greet Dr. Ludwig the physician, who has written very learnedly to me. I had not time to write him, for I have to superintend three printing-presses, all alone. Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me. Your son,

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

LIV

TO HERZOG JOHN FREDERICK, AFTERWARDS ELECTOR

March 10, 1521.

To the Serene High-born Prince, John Frederick of Saxony, Gracious Lord. I have received your Serene Highness's gracious letter, with its comforting contents, with great pleasure.

As I have been so long hindered through my opponents' attacks in expounding the "Magnificat," I now take the opportunity of sending these few lines with the little book.

I need not enlarge upon the causes of the delay, which I acknowledge with shame, for it might wound the tender susceptibilities of your Highness, whose heart is inclined to all that is good, for the furtherance of which may God grant His grace. How important it is that so great a prince, upon whom the welfare of so many depends, should be graciously directed of God, for how much mischief may one left to himself do!

For although the hearts of all men are in God's hands, it is not without cause, we are told, that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water, He turneth it whithersoever He will.

The actions of other men mostly affect only themselves, at most bringing joy or sorrow to a limited number, but lords are set over us who are intended to be useful or prejudicial to a larger or smaller number of people according to the size of their land.

Hence God-fearing princes are called "angels of God" (1 Sam. xxix. 9) in the Bible—nay, even "gods" (Ps.

lxxxii. 6). On the other hand, wicked princes are called "roaring lions" (Zeph. iii. 3), "dragons" (Jer. li. 34), which God Himself numbers among His four plagues: pestilence, famine, war, noisome beasts (Ezek. xiv. 13-19).

Therefore it is most necessary that all rulers should fear God, seeing they do not require to fear men, and should recognise His works, and walk circumspectly, as St. Paul says. Now, I know nothing in the Bible so well adapted for the instruction of the kings and rulers of the earth, as well as for all, than this sacred song of the holy Mother of God. It sings so sweetly of the fear of the Lord, and of His great power, and of His mode of dealing with high and low. Let others delight in worldly songs, but let princes and lords listen to this pure maiden singing her spiritual, pure, and salutary song.

It is not inappropriate that this grand hymn should be daily sung in all the churches at vespers, and should frequently at other times be substituted for other hymns.

May this tender Mother of God have imparted to me of her spirit, so that I may be able to expound in a practical manner her song, from which your princely Grace, and all of us, may derive assistance to lead a praiseworthy life, and afterwards to all eternity praise and sing this everlasting "Magnificat." So help us God. Amen. I herewith humbly commend myself to your princely Grace, begging your Highness will graciously accept my poor effort. Your Electoral Grace's humble chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

LV

TO JOHN LANGE

Luther promises to visit him at Erfurt.

March 29, 1521.

My greeting! Next Wednesday or Thursday I shall visit you, most honoured father, on my way to Worms, with my spiritual escort Ehrenbold—if nothing prevents my coming to Erfurt. Be sure to meet me on my way from Eisenach. Thanks for the ducats you sent. You

see from the enclosed treatise how I have welcomed my
ass Emser.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

LVI

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Spalatin was so alarmed at Luther's temerity, that when near Worms he sent a messenger to him to remind him of Huss's fate. Luther sent him back to say that he would come to Worms if there were as many devils there as tiles on the house-tops.

April 14, 1521.

Health ! We come, my dear Spalatin, although Satan has tried to prevent me through illness. For the whole way from Eisenach to here I have been very weak, and am still much weaker than I ever felt before.

But I also perceive that the Emperor Charles's mandate has been printed in order to fill me with fear. But Christ lives ! and we shall enter Worms in defiance of the gates of hell and all the powers of the air !

When once there we shall see what is to be done, and Satan need not puff himself up, for we have every intention of frightening and despising him. So get a lodging ready for me. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

FRANKFORT.

LVII

TO LUKAS CRANACH

The celebrated painter, and warm friend of the Reformation, who accompanied his Elector, John Frederick, into banishment, and died at Weimar, in 1553.

April 28, 1521.

To the excellent Meister Lukas Cranach, painter in Wittenberg. My dear co-sponsor and friend, I commend you to God.

I shall submit to being hidden away, and as yet do not know where. I would have preferred being put to death by the tyrants, especially by the furious Herzog

George, but was obliged to follow the advice of friends, and wait my time.

They did not expect me to go to Worms, and you all know how they kept faith with me, as to the conduct, demanding that my writings should be delivered up.

I imagined His Imperial Majesty would have assembled many doctors, who would have overcome me in a straightforward manner, but they only cried, "Are the books yours?" "Yes." "Will you retract them or not?" "No." "Then get away." Oh, we blind Germans! How childishly we act—imitating the Romans in such a pitiful way.¹

Greet your dear wife, my co-sponsor, and say I hope she is well. The Jews must sing, Jo, Jo, Jo.² Easter day will come to us also, and then we shall sing "Hallelujah."

But we must first suffer a little. "A little while and ye shall not see me," says Christ, "and again a little while and ye shall see me." I hope that it shall be even so now. But God's will is the very best, and may it happen here, even as in heaven. Amen.

Greet Meister Christian (the goldsmith) and his wife, and thank the Town Council for the conveyance to Worms.

If Licenciate Feldkirche³ is no table, ask Amsdorf to preach. He will gladly do so. I commend you to God, and may He keep your hearts in peace in Christ, in presence of the Romish wolves with their followers. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

FRANKFORT-ON-MAIN.

LVIII

TO GRAF ALBRECHT OF MANSFELD

Luther relates proceedings at Worms.

May 3, 1521.

Most Gracious Lord. Herr Rudolph von Watzdorf (the Count's steward) begged me to send a private account,

¹ Luther left Worms secretly on April 26.

² Luther alludes to their joy at Christ's death on Good Friday.

³ A canon in the Schloss Church in Wittenberg.

of what happened to me at Worms. To begin with, they did not expect me to appear, for although I had a safe-conduct I was condemned before I was tried, and asked if I would disown my books. You know my answer. His Majesty, indignant, wrote with his own hand, ordering the States to proceed against me, as was seemly for a Christian Emperor and Defender of the Faith to act to a hardened heretic.

I was admonished by some magnates of the realm to submit my books to the Emperor and Diet, and was then summoned before the Bishop of Treves, Elector Joachim, etc.

The Elector of Baden gave me a most ingenious admonition, saying they did not intend disputing with me, but would just admonish me in a brotherly way, begging me to consider what confusion had arisen through me, and that I should honour the powers that be, and yield in much—even although the authorities may at times have erred, and such like. I said I was willing to submit my books, not only to His Majesty, but to the least of his subjects, provided nothing should be decreed against the gospel, and also that I had never taught any one to despise the authorities, and was not attacking Pope or Council for their evil lives, but for false doctrine. For where false doctrine is, there obedience has no sway.

I pointed out the article condemned in Constance : “There is only one universal Church, which is the company of the elect.” This being an article of our faith, I would not have condemned it. We say, “We believe in one holy Christian Church.”

We must avoid offence in works, but cannot in doctrine, for God’s Word is ever an offence to the great, the wise ; and the saints, even as Christ Himself was made of God, a sign which was spoken against.

Therefore my Lord of Treves, in despair, summoned Dr. Hieronymus Behns, Amsdorf, and myself. It was a miserable disputation, their sarcastic allusions missing their aim entirely. I said the Christian must judge for himself, even as he must live and die for himself, and that the Pope was not umpire in spiritual things—God’s Word

being the property of all believers, as St. Paul says, and so we parted.

Once more Dr. Peutinger wished me to submit my books to His Majesty, for I ought to believe they would come to a Christian conclusion. When hard pressed, I asked the Chancellor if they would counsel me to trust the Emperor and others, as they had already condemned me and burned my books. Afterwards my Lord of Treves sent for me alone; for all through His Grace was more than gracious, and brought up the old topic, but I knew no other answer, and he dismissed me.

Then a count came with His Majesty's Chancellor, as notary, and bade me leave Worms, with a safe-conduct of twenty-one days, and His Majesty would treat me as seemed good to him. I thanked His Majesty, and said, "It has happened as the Lord willed. His name be praised!" I was forbidden to preach or write on my journey, and promised all, except to let God's Word be bound.

And thus we parted. I am now in Eisenach—but watch! They will accuse me of preaching at Hersfeld and Eisenach. For they take it literally. I commend myself to your Grace. Your Excellency's chaplain,

MARTIN LUTHER.

Hastily written in Eisenach
on the day of the Holy Cross, 1521.

LIX

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther writes from the Wartburg.

May 12, 1521.

All hail! And you, my Philip, what are you about meantime? Are you praying that my enforced seclusion may draw down some great thing to the glory of God, and therefore I wish to know if you approve of it. I feared it might look as if I were fleeing from the conflict, but I thought it best to give in to those who had arranged it thus. I long earnestly to encounter my enemies and vanquish them in the strife.

While sitting here, I ponder all day long on the state of the Churches as represented in the 88th Psalm. "Why hast Thou made all men in vain?" What a dreadful picture of the wrath of God is the cursed kingdom of the Romish Antichrist; and I lament my hard-heartedness, that I do not weep rivers over the destruction of the daughters of my people. Is there no one who will arise and plead with God, or become a wall for the defence of the house of Israel, in those last days of the wrath of God? Therefore be up and doing, ye servants (*Diener*) of the Word, and build up the walls and towers of Jerusalem till they close round about you. You know your calling and gifts. I pray earnestly for you, if my prayers may avail (which I hope they may). Do the same for me, and let us share this burden.

We are still alone upon the field. When they are done with me they will seek you.

Spalatin writes that a terrible Edict¹ has been issued, making it a matter of conscience for every one to search out my writings to destroy them. The Dresden² Rehoboam rejoices, and is eager to promote such doings.

The Emperor has also been instigated to write to the King of Denmark not to favour the Lutheran heresy, and my enemies now chant, "When will he be destroyed, and his name perish?" Hartmann von Kronenberg has renounced his pay of 200 ducats, and told the Emperor that he will serve him no longer. I believe this Edict will have no effect, except with the above-mentioned Rehoboam, and with your neighbour who is afflicted with a great love of honour. God lives and reigns to all eternity. Amen. God has visited me with great bodily suffering. I have not slept all night, and had no rest. Pray for me, as this evil will become unbearable if it go on increasing as it has hitherto done.

The Cardinal of Salzburg accompanied Ferdinand, the fourth day after our return, to his bride at Innsbruck.

It is said Ferdinand was not greatly pleased with his

¹ That signed by the Emperor at Worms.

² Herzog George, Luther's enemy.

convoy, and neither was the Emperor, Spalatin writes. Write particularly how things are going on with you. And may you be happy with your wife. In the region of the birds.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 6.)

LX

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Amsdorf accompanied Luther to Schloss Altenstein, near Waltershausen, where an armed force captured him.

May 12, 1521.

Health! Grace be with you! I wrote you all a few days ago, dear Amsdorf, but I listened to counsel, and tore up what I had written, as it was not considered safe to send letters. I have now written about the books and sheets to Dr. Hieronymus, and am also writing to the Prior about them in this letter.

You will order what is necessary. God is trying me sorely, but pray for me, because I always pray for you, that God would strengthen your heart. Therefore be of good cheer and proclaim the Word of God with joy, as often as you have the chance. Tell me about your journey, and what you heard at Erfurt. Philip has Spalatin's letter to me. On the day I was torn from you, I reached here at 11 at night, tired and weary, in the garb of a knight.

Here I sit, a free man among the bondmen. Beware of the Rehoboam¹ in Dresden, and the Benhadad² in Damascus, your neighbour. For a terrible Edict has been issued against us, but the Lord will laugh at them! May you prosper in the Lord. Greet all our friends. In the region of the air.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch.)

LXI

TO JOHANN AGRICOLA, EISLEBEN

Luther asks his friend who lived with him in Wittenberg how the gospel was progressing there.

¹ On the margin is Herzog George.

² Elector of Brandenburg.

May 12, 1521.

Health! Although I believe that all I have written to Philip and the others has fallen into your hands, still I seem to feel that since my departure my friends have almost become strangers to me, which God forbid! So I write direct to yourself. Accept my best love, and meditate on these words, "The servant is not greater than his Lord." Greet all your relations and your wife from me. The Lord be gracious to her.

I am a wonderful prisoner, for I sit willingly, and yet against my will here—with good-will, because it is the will of the Lord; against my will, because I long to be free, in order to defend the gospel, although not worthy of this honour. Wittenberg is hated by its neighbours, but the Lord will laugh her enemies to scorn. Write about the preaching, and what part each takes, so that I may know what to hope or fear regarding the gospel. But you that have been called to preach to the children, see that you do it faithfully, and bear what God lays upon you. May you and yours prosper! In the abode of the birds.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch.)

LXII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

A comprehensive letter.

May 26, 1521.

Dear Philip—I forget what I wrote in my sealed letter, so will just answer yours. I am unwilling to answer Jacob Latomo, for I prefer peaceful studies, and it is most annoying to have to reply to such a prolix and ill-written document.

I intended to expound the Epistles and Gospels in German, but you have not sent me the postils, which are now in print. I send you the psalm which was sung to-day at our great feast, which, if the press is empty, you can print, for I worked at it just to occupy my time as I had no books, or give it to good friends and Christian Aurifaber to read, or place it in Amsdorf's hands. I

do not grudge Dr. Lupino a blessed exit out of this life, in which, would to God, we did not live. Still I feel his loss deeply, and think of Isaiah's words, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart."

Our Œcolampadius has been before us with the *Sermon* on Confession, having written a bold treatise on that subject, which will be a fresh trial to Antichrist and his crew. I fancied Spalatin would have sent it to you, or I should have done so, with von Hutten's letters to the Bishops and Cardinals at Worms. I shall, if possible, supplement it with something in German. I am surprised that the new husband in Cambray has so fearlessly stepped into the fray. May God mix some pleasure in his bitter cup. Why have you not sent me your *Method of Teaching* (*Lehrart*) now that it is printed? I wish to know who fills my pulpit oftenest, and if Amsdorf is still sleepy and idle? May God maintain and increase the progress of learning! Amen. Do not be anxious about me, for I am very well, but my weak faith still torments me. My withdrawal from the scene of conflict is of no great moment; for, although glad to be excluded from the heavy responsibility connected with God's Word, yet for the honour of that Word we would rather burn amid fiery coals, than rot solitary and half-alive, if it were God's will.

We have often talked of faith and hope, so let us try for once to put our theory into practice, seeing God has brought it all about, and not we ourselves. If I perish it will be no loss to the gospel, for you far surpass me, and as Elisha was endued with a double portion of Elijah's spirit after his ascension, so may you be enabled to follow on. Amen!

Do not be troubled in spirit; but sing the Lord's song in the night, as we are commanded, and I shall join in. Let us only be concerned about the Word. If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant! If any man perish, let him perish! But we must see that no one can lay the fault at our door. Let the Leipsic people boast; this is their hour. We must go out from our land, and our kindred, and sojourn for a time in a strange land. I still hope to come to you again; but if the Pope seize all who

agree with me, then Germany will raise a hue and cry. And the more he attempts this, the sooner will he and his perish, and I reappear. God rouses many hearts, even those of the populace, so it is not likely this business can be frustrated by force, or, if they try to do so, it will become ten times as powerful as before.

Mürner is silent. What the he-goat (Emser) will do, I know not, but I do not believe that you will write. You would be led astray, which would be the bitterest news I could hear. So long as you and Amsdorf, etc. are there, there is no lack of shepherds. Do not anger God by speaking thus, and make us appear ungrateful. Would that all, even cathedrals, had a fourth part of the teachers of the Word that you have. So thank God for enlightening you. I have expended many words on you.

The Cardinal of Mayence has a hundred sworn enemies, and Dr. Schifer is very ill with fever. Some say he is dead. A bishop who was very hostile to me at Worms has come to grief. I have no other news, for I am a hermit, a very monk without cowl and robe ; you would see a knight and scarcely recognise me.

Tell Amsdorf that the pastor in Hirschfeld (Feldkirche), an upright man, has also married, so it is not you alone who have a newly married provost. I fear that the provost in Cambray may be dismissed, and now that there may be other mouths to fill it would be serious. If he can only believe that the Lord, the universal Shepherd, still lives, who will not suffer even a bird to starve.

Greet and admonish him, and I shall do the same, so that all may rejoice together. By doing so you will do me a favour, and it will be a joy to God, and a grief to the devil and his followers.

Your despondency is my greatest trial, your joy is mine also ; so live at peace in the Lord, to whom I hope you commit me even as I do you.

Maintain the Church of Christ over which the Holy Ghost has made you bishops, but not gods.

Give all my friends my love, of whom there are many. You need not greet M. Eisleben, or the fat Flemmischen, for I am writing them. But remember Johann Scherd-

fegeru, Peter Suaven, and all the church in your house, Henricus Zütphen, and all the brothers.

I have written to the Prior. Also greet M. Lucano and Christianum, Dr. Eschhausen, and whoever occurs to you. Just look at this miserable paper which I have to use. Once more farewell!

In the region of the birds who sing beautifully on the trees, praising God night and day, with all their might.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 79.)

LXIII

TO FRANZ VON SICKINGEN

Luther dedicates his treatise on *Confession* to this knight.

June 1, 1521.

The grace of God and peace in Christ be with you! We read, worshipful sir, in Joshua, how God led the children of Israel into the promised land of Canaan, overthrowing thirty-one kings with their towns, and no town save Gibeon was humble enough to sue for peace. In Joshua, 11th chap., it is written—"There was not a city that made peace with Israel, save Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly," etc. The historian seemed to wish to set them up as an example to our Papist-Bishops, and other spiritual tyrants, who now see that the people are tired of their ways, the light of the gospel having exposed their doings. And yet they will not humble themselves to seek peace, and thus at last they perish. They blame me, and yet they must know how I have often begged for peace, and offered to answer any questions, and even went to a second Imperial Diet, but all has been of no avail.

In order not to be idle in my Patmos, I have written an Apocalypse, which I shall send to prove my gratitude to you. It is a sermon on *Confession*. In the next fasting time I shall issue a book of instructions for young

communicants, begging our spiritual Junkers and tyrants to permit those simple creatures to enjoy it in peace, and showing them how their tyranny has almost put an end to confession. . . .

But they will not listen to reason—well—well! I have seen more bubbles than they—and even once—a dreadful smoke, which threatened to obscure the sun, but the smoke has vanished long ago, and the sun still shines. I shall continue to declare the truth fearlessly. Neither of us is yet over the mountain, but I have one advantage, I am single.

God make the truth victorious. I commend Ulrich von Hutten and Martin Bucer to your Worship. Given in my Patmos.

MARTIN LUTHER.

LXIV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther sends Spalatin some writings to be printed.

June 10, 1521.

All hail! I have not only received your long epistle, dear Spalatin, but that of Œcolampadius, and now send you the “Magnificat” complete, with the pamphlet on *Confession* dedicated to Franz von Sickingen, which I should like printed first. The 21st Psalm is off to the printers. See if no alterations be necessary, for I do not yet know if I shall annex the 119th Psalm to something else, but I shall decide when I hear what you all think. I must also answer Latomus of Louvain, who makes so much of his lord the Pope.

I marvel greatly at Œcolampadius, not because he is pleased with what I do, but that he is so full of joy, and so bright and Christ-like. God maintain and strengthen him. I am at one and the same time both idle and very busy. I study Greek and Hebrew, and write without ceasing. My present host entertains me much better than I deserve.

The illness from which I suffered in Worms is worse, so that I almost despair of recovery. The Lord tries me

sorely, so that I may never be without the cross. His name be praised. Amen !

I am surprised that the Imperial Edict has never been made public. It is said here that Schifer is dead, and has left a million gulden to Dr. Carola. He would indeed be a bold Christian who would not dread such a mountain of gold.

I have not replied to the young Prince's letter, seeing my abode is to be kept secret, so I must not betray it by constant writing.

Pray earnestly for me, as I need nothing else. I have everything in abundance. It is nothing to me how the world treats me. I am here at peace. Farewell in the Lord, and greet all who ought to be greeted. From the isle of Patmos.

HENRICUS NESCIUS.

(Walch, 74.)

LXV

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther blames his friend for missing him so much.

July 13, 1521.

I am displeased with your letter for two reasons : (1) Because you do not bear the cross patiently, yielding to your emotions, as is your wont ; (2) That you ascribe so much to me, as if I alone could look after God's concerns, for here I sit, careless and idle, consumed by my fleshly desires. Instead of being ardent in spirit I am the prey of sinful appetites—laziness and love of sleep. For eight days I have neither prayed nor studied, through fleshly temptations. If I do not improve I shall go to Erfurt and consult the physicians, for I can endure my malady no longer. And even God seems to tempt me, by making me wish to escape from this wilderness. I shall not answer Emser ; ask Amsdorf to do it, if he is not too good for such filth. I shall put your apology for the Parisian asses with all their drivel into German, with annotations. I wish you could issue Œcolampadius's book on Confession in German to annoy the Papists. I am

also putting the Gospels into German, and when enough are ready shall send them to the press. When things are going so well with you I am not needed. Why do you not spare yourself? I warn you always of this, but you remain deaf. As to the lawfulness of the sword, I abide by my opinion. You expect me to quote a Gospel command on the subject. I agree with you that no such command or precept is to be found in the Bible. It would not be seemly that it should; for the Gospel is a law unto the free, and has nothing to do with the rights of the sword, although such a right is not forbidden, but rather praised, which does not apply to anything merely permitted. For outward ceremonies are neither commanded nor commended in the Gospel, even as too great carefulness about earthly things is not considered justifiable. For the Gospel lays down no hard and fast rule in this matter, for its domain is the spirit, and not the letter. But are they therefore not to be used? Do not the necessities of this life rather justify their use? Were all Christians—such ideas would be very well. If the sword were sheathed, how long would the Church stand in the world, for neither life nor goods would be safe. But what do you make of Abraham, David, and the saints under the old dispensation, using the sword? And they were good men. . . . And strange to say, it is not forbidden in the Gospel, but the believing soldiers who asked John for counsel were rather confirmed in its lawfulness. I fear, dear Philip, I reap more satisfaction from what I have written to you than you will derive from it. There is no passage in Scripture where we are commanded to despise those in authority, but rather to honour and pray for them. I wish Amsdorf much happiness upon becoming rich, but it would bring him even more happiness should he prove willing to yield up an apostle.

You have already enough, and I do not see why you long so for me, or why my services are so necessary to you.

You lecture (*leset*), Amsdorf lectures, and Jonas also. Dear one! Do you wish the kingdom of God to be proclaimed to you alone? Must the gospel not be preached to others?

Will your Antioch not contribute a Silas, Paul, or Barnabas to help the Spirit's work? I tell you plainly, that although I love to be with you, I would settle in Erfurt, Cologne, or wherever God might graciously open a door for me, to proclaim the Word. One must not think of oneself, for the harvest is great.

I know nothing of my return. You know with whom that rests.

Spalatin writes that the Prince commands a part of the *Confession* to be kept intact, at which I am much displeased.

Pray do not regulate your actions by the will of the Court, which I have hitherto done.

The half would not have been accomplished had I always listened to such counsel. They are only human like ourselves.

I shall make Spalatin speak out.

Such complaisance encourages our opponents and shows our cowardice. My best wishes for your health. This letter has long been finished, but he who promised to take it has forgotten. All of you pray for me. For I shall be immersed in sin in this solitude. From my desert.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Augustinian.

(Walch, v. 15. 75.)

LXVI

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther relates his experiences at a hunt.

August 15, 1521.

I have received the third sheet of *Confession*, dear Spalatin, Philip sending it along with the first; but the printing is execrable. Would that I had sent nothing German. See he does not print my German postils, but rather returns what I have sent you, and I shall get them done elsewhere. For why should I work so hard only to have things turned out in so slovenly a manner? I should not like the Epistles, etc., to be so sinned against, so shall send no more at present, although I have ten large sheets

ready, and till these shameless money-makers, the printers, cease looking solely to their own interest, no more shall be sent. Philip has sent me three sheets of Latomus, with which I am much pleased. I wish Carlstadt would write in a more polished way against celibacy, for I fear he will affront us. If he were only better adapted for the praiseworthy work he has undertaken ; for our opponents slander the very best that can be written, so we must be careful not to bring discredit on the Word, for we are a spectacle unto the world, as St. Paul teaches.

Perhaps I am mixing myself in things that do not concern me ; but what can be more dangerous than to incite people to matrimony ? I would like the question of matrimony left free according to Christ's command, but I am powerless in the matter. Do not trouble yourself as to my bearing my exile patiently. It is all one to me where I am, if I am not a burden to these people, but I fancy I live here at the expense of the Prince, or I should not remain an hour longer if I thought I were consuming this good man's substance, although he supplies my wants abundantly. Try to shed light on this, for he always declares it comes out of the Prince's pocket. I am so constituted that I worry incessantly for fear of burdening any one.

I followed the chase for two days last week, to get a taste of the pleasures which fine gentlemen love so well. We caught two hares and a few poor roes. Truly a worthy occupation for idle people ! Amid the nets and the dogs I pondered over theological matters. I could not but feel sad at the deep mysteries which lay concealed beneath the gay scene. For, does not the devil with his dogs, those godless teachers, bishops, etc., thus pursue and take captive innocent creatures—those poor believing souls ; but worse is still to come. I had managed to save a poor hare, and hid it under my coat, but the dogs discovered it, and bit its leg through the coat, and choked it, so we found it dead. Thus do the Pope and Satan, despite my efforts, try to ruin saved souls. I have had enough of this kind of hunting, and think it finer to slay bears and wolves, and godless creatures such as these.

See that at Court you learn to hunt for souls, so that one day you may find yourself in Paradise—a piece of game which it gave Christ, the best huntsman, much trouble to catch and keep.

I have changed my mind and send the rest of the postils. But let them be printed on good paper, with Lotter's letters, for it will be a large book, and I'll spread it over the four quarters of the year, so that it may not be too heavy.

But it must not be as I wish, but as you can arrange there. Let the MS. be returned to me. I know what Satan is after.

I wonder if my "Magnificat" will ever be ready. Farewell, and pray for me. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 15. 73.)

LXVII

TO THE CHRISTIANS IN WITTENBERG

With this letter Luther sends an exposition of the 37th Psalm.

Possibly in August.

To the poor little company of Christians at Wittenberg, Dr. Martin Luther sends grace and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ.

St. Paul, who preached in many places, and now sat as a prisoner in Rome, never ceased to pray for those who had been converted through his means, and to comfort them by his writings, to which his Epistles bear ample testimony. Following his example, I cannot refrain from anxiety on your behalf (seeing it is partly through me, poor creature, that it has been revealed to you) that wolves may follow me into the sheepfold. And although, by the grace of God, many have taken my place, which might make such anxiety unnecessary, yet I cannot overcome it.

We are not worthy (I especially, alas) to suffer anything for the truth, let alone having hatred, shame, reproach, envy, and all manner of ignominy heaped upon us by the Papists. Had God not withstood them, those bloodthirsty murderers of souls would have swallowed us

up quick, and torn us with their teeth. Till now they have merely called us Wycliffites, Hussites, heretics, venting their wrath upon us by calling us evil names, and attacking our Christian profession. But let them do it, dear friends. He is above—the Judge of all! We may rejoice that so far we have never dreaded the light, as they do—even as an evil conscience trembles before a law court. It must be a great trial to them that I have three times appeared before my enemies to testify of our faith: First at Augsburg, before the Cardinal; then at Leipsic, before those who would gladly have extinguished us, and yet their rage and cunning were of no avail; and now at Worms, where bishops and doctors did their best to get me to recant. But God enabled me to resist the efforts of princes and dignitaries, so that I withstood all their power.

Had it been otherwise, I should have been ashamed of my German land, allowing the Papal tyrants thus to befool us. But we all know that the devil was at the bottom of it. Now, I do not boast of these three appearances, as if the glory were ours; but to acknowledge the grace of God in order to trust Him at all times.

And, as I do not pretend to be St. Paul, who out of the abundant riches of his spirit could comfort his spiritual children, I have taken it upon me to put into German the 37th Psalm, which is full of consolation, and send it to you, it being so suited to our circumstances, for it exhorts us to “cease from anger, and forsake wrath,” assuring us “that yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.” Certainly our enemies resemble those who are rebuked in this Psalm, and we are comforted. For we, who by God’s grace cleave to the Scriptures, are those who are feared and hated by those who blaspheme the truth. But let them! Had they been worthy of the truth they would long ago have been converted through my numerous writings.

I teach them; they revile me. I pray for them; they despise my prayers. I scold them; they scorn me. What more can I do? for Christ says, “As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him; he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment.” What does not belong

to heaven, no one can take into it, although he tore it into pieces. But that which is destined to get in shall enter, in spite of the efforts of the whole army of devils to prevent it. But we must pray for the poor little company who are being led astray by them, that they may be delivered out of the claws of the murderer of souls at Rome, and of his apostles. I commit you to God, and may your faith and confidence be graciously preserved in Christ Jesus. Amen. Amen.

(Exposition of 37th Psalm follows.)

I send you this Psalm, dear friends, for your consolation and instruction, according to St. Paul's precept, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" "Giving thanks always for all things," etc. I send this for the benefit of those who are weak in the faith; for, as to the strong ones among you, I would rather learn from them. Therefore take comfort and remain steadfast. Do not be alarmed through the raging of the godless; for, God be praised, we have beaten them so far that they can only rage, which shows they are ignorant of divine things; and the longer they act thus the blinder they become, and display their folly all the more. . . . I commend you to God. Pray for me. I do not concern myself about my enforced absence from you. By God's grace I am as courageous as ever. Be of good cheer, and fear no one. The grace of God be with you. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

LXVIII

TO THE LEARNED AND SAINTLY NICOLAS GERBEL

Luther congratulates him on his marriage.

November 1, 1521.

Grace in Christ! Your letter, dearest Gerbel, written before Ascension, only reached me at Michaelmas, and this is All Saints' Day. When will it reach you? Perhaps before next Ascension Day, or the Greek Kalends—never. You see the cause of my silence. I risk much in writing. Attribute all to the hidden will of God. I

hope you have already received an answer from others to your anxious inquiries as to my condition.

I have withdrawn from our common cause by the advice of good friends—very unwillingly, it is true, and uncertain as to whether I had acted rightly towards God. For my part, I fancied one was bound to sacrifice his neck in the universal fray.

But this was not desired, so I was borne off by horsemen, in the disguise of a knight, on my way from Möhra, and placed in a secure spot, in feigned imprisonment, where I am treated royally. But believe me, in this solitude, with nothing to do, I am the prey of a thousand devils. It is much easier to fight a devil in the flesh (men) than evil spirits in heavenly things (or under heaven). I often fall, but the right hand of the Most High raises me again.

So, willingly as I would strive for freedom, I shall remain where God has placed me. It is not safe to send you my writings, therefore I have written to Spalatin to arrange this.

Meantime I have written a treatise against Antichrist, also one on Confession in German, and have sent it as a letter of consolation, with an exposition of the 37th Psalm, to the Church in Wittenberg.

Philip has issued a pamphlet against the Parisians which I have translated into German. This too is printed.

I am writing a German Exposition of the Epistles and Gospels, which will be printed all through the year.

I have also a public castigation of the Cardinal of Mayence ready because of the Indulgences, which he has once more erected in Halle; and in addition, a disquisition on the gospel of the ten lepers: all in German.

I am born for my Germans, whom I desire to serve. I should like to write openly against the universities, but as yet have decided upon nothing.

I have made up my mind not to expound Matthew.

I had begun to lecture upon both Testaments in a popular manner in Wittenberg, and had reached the 32nd chapter of Genesis, and in the Gospels had got to the voice of John the Baptist. At this point my voice was quenched. Now that is all you wished to know.

Give my best love to your dear one, and I hope that she may love you dearly, and that you too may love her.

It is good that your former state of celibacy, with all its accompanying evils, has been replaced by marriage.

Endure all that this condition of God's appointment brings with it, and thank God. I am daily gaining more insight into the godless lives of the unmarried of both sexes, so that nothing sounds worse to me than the words monk, nun, priest, for I regard a married life of deep poverty as paradise in comparison. Greet Brunsfels, Caspar Urzigereum, and all Evangelicals from me. From my hermitage.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 1.)

LXIX

TO HANS LUTHER

Luther tells his father that he is now free from his monkish vows, and sends him his book on the *Vow*.

November 21, 1521.

To his dear father, Hans Luther, from Martin Luther, his son.

My reason for dedicating this book to you was not to honour your name before the world, thus disobeying St. Paul's admonition, not to seek honour after the flesh, but to explain its contents.

It is almost sixteen years since I took the monk's vows without your knowledge or consent. You feared the weakness of my flesh, for I was a young fellow (*Blut*) of 22 (I use Augustine's word) and full of fire, and you know the monkish life is fatal to many, and you were anxious to arrange a rich marriage for me. And for long this fear and anxiety made you deaf to those who begged you to be reconciled to me, and to give God your dearest and best. But at last you gave way, although you did not lay aside your care; for, I well remember telling you I was called through a terrible apparition from heaven, so that, when face to face with death, I made the vow, and you exclaimed, "God grant it was not an apparition of the Evil One that startled you." The words sank into my

heart as if God had uttered them, but I hardened my heart against it, till you exclaimed, "Hast thou never heard that one should obey his parents?" In spite of this most powerful word I ever heard out of a human mouth, I persevered in my own righteousness, and despised you as being only a man.

But were you then unaware that God's command must be obeyed first of all? Had you been able, would you not then have exercised your paternal prerogative, and dragged me from beneath the cowl? Had I known, I would have suffered a thousand deaths rather than have acted as I did. For my vow was not worth such deception. . . . But God, whose mercy is boundless, has brought about great good through my errors and sins. Wouldst thou not rather have lost a hundred sons than not have beheld such marvellous blessing? Satan must always have foreseen this, for he has poured out the whole vials of his fury upon me. . . .

But God willed that I might learn the wisdom of the high schools and the sanctity of the cloisters for myself. . . .

Dear father, do you ask me to renounce monkish orders? But—God has been before you, and has brought me out Himself . . . and has placed me, as thou seest, not in the miserable, blasphemous service of monachism, but in the true divine worship, for no one can doubt that I serve God's Word. Parental authority must yield before this divine service; for, "whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," says Christ. Not that parental authority ceases with this; but where Christ's authority clashes with that of parent's, the latter must give way.

Therefore I send you this book, from which you will see how miraculously Christ has redeemed me from my monkish vows, and endowed me with such freedom, that although I am the servant of all men, I am subject to Him alone. For He is my sole Bishop, Abbot, Prior, Lord, Father, Master! I know no other. I trust He has deprived you of your son, so that, through me, He may help the sons of many others, and prevent you rejoicing alone. I know you will do no more in this matter.

Although the Pope should assassinate me, and cast me into hell, he cannot raise me up again to slay me once more. For should he condemn me, and burn me, my heart and will shall still stand out against his absolution. I hope the great day is approaching when the kingdom of wickedness will be cast down and destroyed. Would to God we were considered worthy to be burned by the Pope, that our blood might cry out for vengeance, and thereby hasten his end.

But, if not worthy to testify with our blood, let us cry to Him alone, and plead for mercy, so that through our life and voice we may bear witness that Jesus alone is our Lord and God—blessed to all eternity. Amen. In Whom may you be blessed, dear father—and the mother—thy Margaret, along with our whole connection—all of whom I greet in Christ Jesus. From the wilderness.

MARTIN LUTHER.

LXX

TO ARCHBISHOP ALBRECHT OF MAYENCE

Out of deference to Spalatin and the Court, Luther had kept back his book against the idol at Halle, but now tries to stop the scandal.

December 1, 1521.

My services are ever at your disposal, esteemed lord! Doubtless your Electoral Grace remembers that I wrote you twice in Latin. First when those lying Indulgences were issued, under your Grace's name (Oct. 31, 1517), warning you against those corrupt, money-loving preachers, and their heretical books. And although I could have traced the whole uproar to your having given your sanction to the publication of these books, still I have spared your Grace, and the House of Brandenburg, fancying your Highness did it out of ignorance, led astray by false flatterers, whom I attacked as you know. But my faithful admonition was turned into ridicule, and my services repaid with ingratitude instead of thanks.

The other occasion (Feb. 4, 1520), I humbly begged to be instructed by your Grace, in answer to which I

received an unkind, unbishop-like answer, referring me to a higher tribunal for instruction. Although these two letters produced no effect, I send a third warning, in German, to see if this perhaps uncalled-for petition may avail. Your Grace has again set up the idol at Halle, which robs poor simple Christians both of their money and their souls. Perhaps you fancy you are safe because I am out of the way, and that His Majesty will extinguish the monk. I do not object; but shall do what Christian love demands, and pay no attention to the gates of hell—not to speak of the popes, cardinals, and bishops. I shall not hold my peace when the Bishop of Mayence declares it is not seemly to instruct a poor monk who begs to be enlightened, and at the same time knows how to deal with money. The dishonour is not mine, but must be sought elsewhere. Therefore, I humbly request that your Grace would prove yourself to be a bishop, and not a wolf, permitting the poor flock to be robbed. You know that the Indulgence is sheer knavery, and that Christ alone ought to be preached to the people. Your Electoral Highness must remember out of what a tiny spark this great fire arose—the whole world fancying that one poor beggar was too insignificant for the Pope to meddle with. God still lives, and no one need doubt that He can overcome the Bishop of Mayence, whose end no one can foresee. . . .

Therefore I openly declare that unless the Indulgence is done away with, I must publicly attack your Grace, as well as the Pope—tracing Tetzels former excesses to the Archbishop of Mayence, and letting the world see the difference between a bishop and a wolf. If I be despised another will appear who will despise the despisers, as Isaiah says. And it is time to rebuke the evil-doers, that offences may be driven from the kingdom of God.

I also beg your Grace to leave the married priests in peace, and not rob them of what God has given them, else a cry will arise that the bishops should first take the beam out of their own eyes, etc. So I beg your Grace to take care, and permit me to keep silence, for I have no pleasure in your Highness's shame and disgrace; but if you are not, then I, and all Christians, must stand up for the glory

of God, even although a Cardinal should be plunged in disgrace. I expect your Grace's answer within fourteen days.¹

If not, then my book against the idol in Halle will appear; and if your Grace's counsellors should try to prevent its circulation I shall use means to hinder this. May God endow your Electoral Highness with grace to do the right. From my desert. Your Electoral Grace's obedient
MARTIN LUTHER.

LXXI

TO THE WITTENBERGERS

A fragment. Probably written after Luther had been in Wittenberg. He disapproves of their way of reforming abuses.

Perhaps December 1521.

I cannot always be with you. Every one must die for himself, and look forward to the pangs of departure alone, for no one can counsel or help. I shall not be with you, nor you with me. Whoever is then able to overcome sin, hell, and the devil is blessed—whoever cannot do so is accursed. But no one is able to do so unless during life he has learned to appropriate and practise the consolations and maxims of the gospel against sin. The soul only takes with it what it has received in the world, and nothing more. No one can resist the devil until he has come to a knowledge of Christ, and knows that it was specially for him Christ died, because God desired his salvation. In that case that soul must become blessed, although all the devils were dead against it. We were all born sinners, and ruined through Adam's fall, so that we can do nothing but sin, being in bondage, and "are by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

These innovations have been accompanied by attacks on the mass, pictures, and the sacrament, and other lawless proceedings, which destroy faith and love, thereby wounding the tenderest feelings of many pious people, which is surely the devil's work.

¹ It arrived December 21; a conciliatory letter.

Doubtless it would be a very good thing were such changes made, were it generally desired, and no one objected.

But this will never be the case. We cannot all be so learned as Carlstadt, therefore we must give in to the weak, else those who are strong will run into all excesses, and the weak who cannot keep up with you will perish. God has been very gracious to you in Wittenberg, giving you the pure Word, so you should have patience with those who never heard it, or where is your love?

We have many brothers and sisters in Leipsic, Meissen, and elsewhere, and these we must take to heaven with us. Although Herzog George, etc., are very angry with us at present, still we must bear with them, and hope for the best. They may become better than we.

You have gone about the business in a way of which I cannot approve, using your fists, and if this happen again I shall not take your part. You began without me, so carry it on without me. What you have done is wrong, no matter how many Carlstadts approve of it.

You have injured the consciences of many who have taken the sacrament, and attacked it, tearing down pictures, and eating eggs and meat. You are to blame for this, and yet you consider yourselves Christians, and better than others.

Believe me, I know the devil well, and he is at the root of all this, and has led you to attack the sacrament, etc., so that he might injure God's Word, and meantime faith and love are forgotten.

Now we shall examine the nature of the things which have been done in my absence. There are things which God has commanded, and these must be kept, for no man, be he pope or bishop, has power to alter them. Other things God has left free to us, such as eating, drinking, marrying, etc. God has not forbidden these. Popes and bishops have tried to deprive us of this freedom, by setting up priests and monks, to whom marriage is forbidden, appointing fast days, and suppressing true fasting, thereby leading many to the devil, of whom St. Paul says, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith,

giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats," etc.

For no magistracy nor any man has power to change the Word of God, therefore anything popes or bishops may ordain is of no account whatever.

Still, one must not insist upon these free things being carried out to the letter. When the Pope says, "Thou shalt not eat meat or eggs on Fridays," then it is a sin to do so; but if it be anything vital, you must resist, saying, "How shall I eat, for you have forbidden what God permits?" Deal thus with the obstinate, but be kind to the weak, feeding those who are young in the faith with milk, even as a new-born babe is fed on milk to begin with, afterwards getting soup, bread, and cheese. And it is the same with weak Christians. Leave your neighbour alone till he too becomes strong, and thy equal. When St. Paul was with the Jews he suited himself to them, and when with the Gentiles he lived as a Gentile. In these open questions act according to the circumstances.

If a sick person cannot eat fish, then he gets meat. If Rome permits this for money, I may do it when necessary without payment. It is the same with marriages and such like. But the kingdom of heaven does not consist in eating and drinking. St. Paul says, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." So, no one must go against God's Word—whether he be Pope, Bishop, Emperor, or Prince. Listen to this simile. The sun has great brilliancy and heat. Its brilliancy neither Emperor nor King can avert, so the Word of God can no one hinder; but one can escape from the hot rays of the sun into the shade, and this is what love does when it yields to its neighbour.

I would do even as much for my enemies (in the hope of their conversion) and for the weak, and would think nothing of wearing this cowl if it would do them any good.

MARTIN LUTHER.

LXXII

TO JOHN LANGE, AUGUSTINIAN

The first intimation Luther gives of putting the New Testament into German.

December 18, 1521.

I do not approve of the stormy breaking up, for you might all have parted in peace and friendship. You who propose attending the Imperial Diet, see that you defend the gospel.

I shall remain here in seclusion till Easter, and write postils, and translate the New Testament into German, which so many people are anxious to have. I hear you also are occupied therewith. Go on with what you have begun. Would to God that every town had its interpreter, and that this book could be had in every language, and dwell in the hearts and hands of all. You will get all the rest of the news from the Wittenbergers. I am, God be praised, sound in body and well cared for, but much tried by sins and temptations. Pray for me, and go on prospering. From the wilderness.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 15. 82.)

LXXIII

TO WENZEL LINK, NÜRNBERG

Concerning monastic vows.

December 20, 1521.

Grace and peace! Most excellent Wenzel, I am delighted that my answer to the Catherinas pleased you, for I value the verdict of an upright man.

But remember, whoever starts with good premises cannot repudiate the conclusions to which they lead, and the results you now see in this cloister.

For if it be contrary to the gospel that one sin in the use of meats, etc., what would become of vows, cloisters, kingdoms, etc.? Whose obedience would you compel? Whom would you recall, after quitting the cloister? Whom would you accuse as a disturber of

the peace, when you are bound over to teach that such freedom or license is no sin? You perhaps ask my advice in this matter, and I tell you that you do not require my counsel.

For I know you will undertake nothing, nor permit anything that is in opposition to the gospel, although all the cloisters should be destroyed.

I am indeed deeply displeased at the stormy upheaval of which I have heard. For they should agree to let them leave in peace, but perhaps this may be the punishment of unrighteous vows, wickedly cast aside, so that what was bound together through an evil unanimity might be abruptly severed.

But to recall them does not seem to me expedient, even although they have not acted wisely. And I do not believe you can forbid it.

But if there are some still who wish to leave the cloister, it would be best not to retain this chapter (capital), and following the example of Cyrus, give those who wish to leave their freedom through a public edict, without expelling any, or forcing any to remain.

But meanwhile you will continue to share the government of this Babel with Jeremiah. For I should like the dress and usages of the order to be retained. I see no other way, for I do not wish to represent a lawless body, or to be a ringleader of unrighteousness. If you read my pamphlet on the *Vow* you will find my opinions.

I was in Wittenberg, but did not dare enter the cloister.

You must help us, for the times and God's cause demand this. I must admit that unheard-of things are happening, but it is against our will.

This is clear as the sun to me. In addition, you have Philip Melanchthon, and others, whom you can easily ask for counsel. For we would like if you retained the capital (chapter) at Wittenberg.

Where our dearest Father Staupitz is I do not know. But I hear he is at the Court of the Salzburg god.

I compassionate the excellent man ; still you may give him my love. For, from my writings, he must already have seen who I am and what I am doing.

I am busy at the Church postils and the German translation of the Bible. Farewell. From the wilderness.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze, v. 1.)

1522

Pope Leo X. died. The German Hadrian succeeded. Luther returned to Wittenberg, March 7, and preached against image-breaking, etc.

LXXIV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther informs him why he was about to leave his Patmos.

January 17, 1522.

Health! I have received all, my Spalatin, even the packet, although rather late. It is not because of the Zwickau prophets I have come, nor will they influence me in the least. But I do not wish our people to put them in prison.

Rumours have been set afloat as to the Eulenbergers regarding innovations in the Lord's Supper. I was so angry that I determined to go to Wittenberg and see for myself, but I am daily hearing far more important things.

Therefore, if God will, I shall soon return, if not to Wittenberg, certainly elsewhere, or wander about.

I do not wish the Prince to be anxious about me, although I wish he had my faith, or I his power. If so, doubtless he would, without bloodshed, extinguish the smoking firebrands.

The unhappy Herzog George acts in this matter, even as He who is terrible in His judgments towards the children of men has determined. He cannot see that his rancour against this party is pure hatred. May the Lord have mercy on him, if he be worthy of it.

See that our Prince does not soil his hands with the blood of the Zwickau prophets. Farewell, and pray for me. Neither the Bishop's nor Capito's letters please me, because of their duplicity. I have written to Faber that I know his spirit. I grieve over the destruction of the

pictures, because I became surety for their preservation.
From the wilderness.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. xi., Appendix 104.)

LXXV

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK

Luther admonishes the Elector to steadfastness and patience.

End of February or March.

To my Most Gracious Lord Frederick, in my own hand. Grace and prosperity from God the Father to the new relic! Such is my greeting to you, most gracious lord, instead of sending you my sympathy. Your Electoral Highness has for long been trying to procure sacred relics from all lands, but God has now granted your desire, and without money or trouble has furnished you with a cross, fully equipped with nails, spears, and scourges.

Once more, I repeat, prosperity from God to the new relic. Do not let your Highness fear, but stretch out your arms cheerfully, and let the nails be firmly inserted; nay, give thanks and be joyful, for thus must it be with all who love God's Word—they must put up with the rage of Annas and Caiaphas, and remember that Judas, too, was an apostle, and Satan appeared among the children of God.

Your Grace must only be wise and prudent, and not judge according to human wisdom, nor with respect of persons. . . . And above all, do not despair, for Satan has not accomplished what he meant to do. If your Grace would only believe a fool like me; for I am too well acquainted with such like assaults of Satan to fear them, and that vexes him greatly. As yet it is all pretence. Let the world raise a hue and cry, let those who fall, fall—even if it be St. Peter and the apostles—they will reappear on the third day when Christ rises from the dead.

For 2 Cor. vi. must be fulfilled in us, "As chastened and not killed." Your Electoral Highness will take this

in good part ; for, in my great haste, the pen has run away with me, and I have no more time, for I am anxious to be there myself, if God will. Your Electoral Grace must not trouble with my affairs. Your Electoral Highness's humble servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

LXXVI

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK OF SAXONY

Written in Borna on the way to Wittenberg, in answer to a letter from the Elector, trying to dissuade Luther from coming. His courage is displayed.

March 5, 1522.

To the Serene High-born Prince Frederick, Elector of Saxony, etc. Grace and peace! Most gracious lord. Your Electoral Grace's writing and kind remembrance reached me on Friday evening, the night before I began my journey. That your Electoral Highness had the best intentions towards me is manifest. And this is my answer. Most gracious lord, I herewith desire to make it known that I have not received the gospel from men, but from heaven, through our Lord Jesus Christ, so that I may well (which I shall henceforth do) glory in being able to style myself a servant and evangelist. That I desired to be cited before a human tribunal to have my cause tried was not because I had any doubts as to its truth, but solely because I wished to allure others. But now that I see my great humility only serves to abase the gospel, and that Satan is ready to occupy the place I vacate, even if it be only by a hand-breadth, my conscience compels me to act differently. I have done sufficient for your Grace this year in remaining in my forced seclusion. For the devil knows it was not done out of fear. He saw into my heart, when I came into Worms, that although I had known there were as many devils ready to spring upon me as there were tiles on the house-roofs, I would joyfully have sprung into their midst.

Now Herzog George is far from being equal to one devil, especially seeing the Father has, out of His loving-kindness, made us, through the gospel, joyous lords over

all the devils and death itself, and has permitted us to call him beloved Father. Your Grace can see for yourself that it would be the greatest insult one could pay to such a Father not to trust Him entirely, showing that we are lords over Herzog George's wrath. Were things in Leipsic as they are in Wittenberg, I would nevertheless ride in, even if it were to rain Herzog Georges for nine days, and each was nine times more vehement than this one is. He looks upon my Lord Jesus as a man of straw. But I confess I have often wept and prayed for Herzog George that God would enlighten him. And I shall once more weep and pray for him, and then never again.

And I beseech your Electoral Highness to help me to pray that we may be able to avert the judgment which is hanging over him continually.

I write all this to let your Grace see that I come to Wittenberg under higher protection than that of the Elector, and I have not the slightest intention of asking your Electoral Highness's help. For I consider I am more able to protect your Grace than you are to protect me; and, what is more, if I knew that your gracious Highness could and would protect me I would not come.

In this matter God alone must manage without any human intervention. Therefore he whose faith is greatest will receive the most protection. So, as I see your faith is very weak, I cannot regard you as the man who could either protect or save me. And seeing your Grace wishes to know how to act, as you seem to fancy you have done too little, I would respectfully inform you that you have already done too much, and must now do nothing at all. For God will not suffer your Electoral Highness's or my worrying and activities. He wishes it to be left to Him, to Him and no other, so let your Grace act accordingly.

If your Electoral Highness believes this, then he will be in security and peace; if not, I do and must allow your Electoral Grace to be tormented by care, which is the portion of all who do not believe.

Therefore, seeing I decline to follow your Grace, then you are innocent in God's sight if I am taken prisoner or killed. Your Electoral Highness shall henceforth act thus

regarding your duty towards me as Elector. You must render obedience to the powers that be, and sustain the authority of His Imperial Majesty with all your might, as is only seemly for a member of the Empire, and not oppose the authorities in the event of their imprisoning or slaying me. For no one must oppose the authorities except He who has instituted them ; for it is rebellion against God.

But I hope they will be sensible, and recognise that your Electoral Highness is born in a higher cradle, and should not be expected to wield the rod upon yourself.

If your Grace abide by the Electoral safe-conduct, then you have done enough to show your obedience. For Christ has not taught me to be a Christian to the injury of others.

But should they command your Grace to lay hands on me yourself, then I shall say what to do.

I shall protect you from injury to body, soul, and estate because of my affairs, whether your Grace believes it or not.

I herewith commit you to the mercy of God, and shall discuss things when necessary. I have written this hurriedly, so that your Grace may not be upset by my arrival ; for I must rather be a comfort to every one than occasion of injury if I wish to be a true Christian.

I am dealing with a very different man from Herzog George, with one who knows me well, and whom I do not know at all badly. Were your Grace only to believe he would see the glory of God, but as he has not yet believed, he has seen nothing. To God be love and praise to all eternity. Amen. Given at Borna by my escort. Your Electoral Grace's obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

LXXVII

TO NICOLAS GERBEL

Luther's touching letter to the pious lawyer in Strassburg.

March 18, 1522.

I take it for granted, my beloved Gerbel, that you got my letter from the desert through Philip, but although you have not answered it, I cannot let your good clerk

return without a few lines from me, to send you my love and beg for your prayers. For Satan rages as well as those about me, and threatens me with death and hell, and tries to destroy my flock. Therefore I cast myself alive amidst the fury of Emperor and Pope to try to drive the wolf from the fold, and my only protection is from above, while I dwell among my enemies, who can destroy me any hour. But Christ is Lord over all, the Father having put all things under His feet, even the wrath of Emperor and devils. If He wishes me to be killed let them do it in His name ; but if not, who then can destroy me ?

Cleave to the gospel with fervent prayer, for Satan wishes to root out the gospel and deluge Germany in its own blood.

And he will do it, for no one is ready to stand as a wall towards God for the house of Israel, and because of our deep ingratitude in proclaiming the gospel only in words, not sweetened by love. So let all pray earnestly, for danger is ahead, and the devil means to assail us with incredible cunning and all his might. May you be happy with your beloved wife, and greet all our friends.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 15. 659.)

LXXVIII

TO JOHN LANGE

March 28, 1522.

Greeting ! Without doubt you did not leave the cloister without good reasons for doing so, although I wish you had risen above all reasons. Not that I dispute your right to do so, but because I do not wish to give our opponents occasion for slandering us, even as St. Paul preached the gospel in Achaia without being chargeable to any man, thus retaining his apostolic freedom, etc. But I remind you of all this too late. When I have time I shall write to the Church in Erfurt, although you and yours far surpass us in knowledge of the Word. But the power of the Word is either very faint or quite latent within us, else we should not be so cold, hardened, bold, quarrelsome, and drunken. In short, the old tokens of

Christian love are not visible, St. Paul's words being inverted, "We have the kingdom of God in words, but not in power." I cannot come to you, for it is not right to tempt God by needlessly running into danger, especially as I have enough here; being attacked through the Papal and Imperial Edict, and enjoy as much freedom as the birds of the air, whose only protection is God Almighty. I see that many of our monks leave the cloister for the same reason they enter it, viz. to indulge their sensual appetites, through which Satan brings the gospel into evil repute. But they are idle creatures, so are better to go to ruin without the cowl than beneath it. Greet all friends, for I do not know who may be with you just now. Carry our cause and the life of our Elector to the Lord in prayer, else I fear he may not be able to hold out long. And if this our head were away, there might be an end to the salvation which God may give to our Syria.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

LXXIX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther wishes names of precious stones.

March 30, 1522.

All hail! I send you the letter you were expecting, my Spalatin. I cannot remember what I wrote to Herzog John Frederick, except that I advised him not to introduce innovations unless it could be done without giving offence to the weak, and that all must be done in love. I wrote the same to Herzog Karl.

I have not only translated the Gospel of St. John in my Patmos, but the whole of the New Testament, and Philip and I are now busy correcting it, and, with God's help, it will be a splendid work. Meantime we need your help, to find out proper words, therefore be ready to supply us with the common terms for some things we require, but not those used at Court, for this book is to be written in the simplest language that all may understand it; and so that I may begin at once, send the names of the precious stones mentioned in Rev. chap. xxi., and would that you

could get permission from Court to let us have the loan of some to see what they are like.

I am busy with a treatise upon the gospel method of receiving the sacrament, and although it is a most troublesome piece of work, yet I am not afraid. Christ lives, and for His sake one must not only be a sweet savour in them that are saved, as well as in them that perish, but also be willing to be slain for Him. Farewell, and greet all at Court.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

(Walch, v. 15. 83.)

LXXX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther sends letters from the Low Countries about good works.

April 14, 1522.

Grace and peace in the Lord! I herewith send you what Jacob, the Prior of Antwerp, who was delivered by a miracle, and is now with us, brought me from the Netherlands. I have received the New Testament up to St. John's last sermon, with other things.

I fancy Amsdorf has answered your inquiries as to good works; for one single passage lights up the whole. An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. For as the fruit can never make a tree good, so works can never make a man pious. On the contrary, according to the tree, so is necessarily the fruit; thus it is after the man is pious that good works follow, not that they make him good, but they prove that he is good. So what the Bible says concerning good works must be thus understood, that the man does not become good thereby, but that they testify he is good. Therefore, at the last day Christ will cite good works in proof that those who practised them were pious. Farewell, and pray for me. There is nothing new here except the Chancellor of Baden's booklet against me, because I exposed him for twisting my meaning to the Bishop of Trier, as you are aware.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

(Walch, v. 15, Appendix 89.)

LXXXI

TO THE BURGHERMASTER AND TOWN COUNCIL
OF ALTENBURG

Luther recommends Gabriel Zwilling (Didymus), formerly Augustinian monk in Wittenberg, as preacher in Altenburg.

April 17, 1522.

Most excellent Gentlemen and Friends. The grace and peace of God and my most willing service be with you! Honoured sirs. I was glad to receive your letters about a pastor, and to see how eagerly you long for the Word of God. Therefore I am most willing, and consider it my duty to give you any assistance and counsel I can.

There is one called Gabriel, now in Dueben, who is considered an excellent preacher with much experience, so I would advise you to take him. No doubt some feel a slight aversion to him, because he left the order, and now goes about in the dress of an ordinary priest, but it was well that he should come out, so that many might have the benefit of his ministration, to the edification of their souls. If you do not feel shy of him on this account, then I do not know how I can advise you better. And I have written him to place himself at your disposal, so that you may see him and judge for yourselves. But if you are not pleased, there are still two secular (*weltliche*) priests here, capable men; so if your Excellencies let me know, I shall help you to get one or other of them. Were it possible I would rather come to you myself, to satisfy your ardent longings, than see you at a loss. But if you get Gabriel you have no need of me. I herewith commit you to the grace of God, who can enrich you with faith and love through His Holy Word.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

LXXXII

TO GABRIEL ZWILLING

Luther advises him to accept the call to Altenburg.

April 17, 1522.

Grace and mercy from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

The Town Council of Altenburg asked me to recommend an Evangelical pastor to them; so if you are chosen, accept the call, looking upon it as a call from God. For I have recommended you to them.

So I plead in the name of the Lord Jesus, who through me and Philip calls you to accept it. Go thither in peace, and may you be a blessing to many thousands. But see that you behave in a circumspect manner, going about in an orderly priest's dress; and for the sake of the weak, do away with that broad angular monstrosity of a hat, remembering that you are sent to those who must still be fed with milk—till they are freed from the meshes of the Pope; and this you cannot achieve without the Word, as I have often told you, and which you will see in the last small book I have issued.

The Father desires to draw people to Himself through Christ, not to coerce them through ordinances of ours. One must first instil in them a hatred of all godless ways. Then godlessness will fall away of itself, without compulsion. A love and longing for purity must first be implanted—then piety will follow, and the kingdom of heaven will suffer violence, and the violent will take it by force. The Lord give you wisdom and understanding, that you may be a worthy servant of His Son, and may He bless you in the proclamation of His Word. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

(Walch, v. 15. 666.)

LXXXIII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther sends him a specimen of his translation of the Bible.

May 10, 1522.

All hail ! I send you the beginning of our Bible, but on no account let it be printed. I am expecting the precious stones, which we shall take the greatest care of and faithfully return. Also pray ask Bernard Hirsfeld to petition His Electoral Highness to persuade his Chancellor to remit a certain sum, which our Prior is due upon a valuable possession, and for which I am security, till we can pay it. And there has been no remission of interest. And now that it is not customary to beg (for the cloister), we are 300 florins a year poorer. Here there is nothing but love and friendship. May all prosper with you, and send a favourable answer.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 15. 84.)

LXXXIV

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther presses Link to take up his abode in Wittenberg.

July 4, 1522.

Grace and peace ! You must either, dearest father, be able to give a good reason for keeping away from us, or you must hate our society. For why sit there ? Both north and south are shut up to you, so there is no place where you can be more secure or better cared for than with us. Or does the reputation of our order frighten you, and do you fear association with us banished ones, in case of offending those who seem born to seek cause of offence in Christ ?

But come speedily, for God's sake, so that we may enlist you in the Lord's service. We are waiting for you ; see that you do not turn us into ridicule. We wish your

advice on many necessary matters connected with our faith, to promote the general weal. Farewell in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

(Walch, v. 21. 805.)

LXXXV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther is busy translating the New Testament.

July 4, 1522.

Grace and peace in Christ! I hope, dear Spalatin, that you have received the Gospel of St. Mark and the Epistle to the Romans, with letters from good friends. The Gospel of St. Luke and the two Epistles to the Corinthians will soon be finished. I must reply to the growling lion who calls himself King of England. The ignorance the book displays is not to be wondered at in a royal author, but the bitterness and lies are gigantic. How Satan rages! But I shall embitter him more.

The Picardy people sent to ask my advice as to their faith. I object to their obscure way of expressing themselves, instead of using biblical phrases. And they under-estimate infant baptism, while using it, and also rebaptize some who come from us, and teach the seven sacraments. As to their celibate priesthood, I am pleased in so far that they let every one do as he sees fit.

But pure doctrine is a rare thing. Whether they highly esteem faith and works I do not know, but am doubtful of it. I do not think them wrong about the Lord's Supper, unless they use deceptive words, as they do with Baptism.

Farewell, and pray for me. I do wish you would try to have Philip set free from teaching grammar, and devote himself to theological lectures. It is highly improper, as I have written, that he should earn one hundred gold gulden with grammar lessons, while he is giving two valuable theological lectures. We have teachers enough who can give grammar lessons as well as Philip, who are being deprived of the work. May God root out all false teachers, so that the money may

be better spent. I highly commend this Nürnberg Prior to you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

(Walch, v. 15, Appendix 91.)

LXXXVI

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther sends a book for his host in the Wartburg.

September 25, 1522.

Grace and peace! I beg of you to send this copy of my book to the John in the region of the birds, viz. to my host, as I wished him to have it before more came.

For I am really angry at the Lotter¹ business, and am not yet on speaking terms with him.

You will see what our Wenzel writes.

I ardently desire that the Prince would only attend to his own affairs, and leave me to manage Satan and his hosts. As I have already written, the heaven will not fall although I fall. If His Grace does not believe this, I do, and am sure of it.

But why make so many words? Who does not see that through this present work of God He has turned their threats into ridicule? He who has done this will do so to the end. The whole business is conducted at my risk, and will continue to be so conducted. Farewell, and pray for me. Greet our friends. I am just starting for Leipsic, because I have been so often entreated to come.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 15. 28.)

LXXXVII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther recommends a poor man.

October 4, 1522.

Grace and peace! I found your letter when I returned, dear Spalatin, but the dog had bitten a piece

¹ His printer. See p. 83.

out of it upon the table, so that I could not make out the words about the Lord's inheritance.

But the other part about the Lord's kingdom and righteousness runs thus: "The kingdom of God is the Church of Christ, which must be ruled through the Word of God." "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "The kingdom of God is within you." The righteousness of God is faith. For in the Greek one reads clearly, "The kingdom of God and his righteousness." So let us seek first the kingdom of God, so that the knowledge of Christ may be spread abroad, and all worldly things will be added thereto, for the labourer is worthy of his hire.

I would like you to help this man according to your ability, for he seems poor and needy. Johannes Pomeranus¹ is to be married shortly, and we beg you to speak a good word for him, that he may be supplied with game for the occasion, not only on his own account, for certainly he is worthy of it, but because of us, his guests, as to whom you are able to judge whether we deserve it or not. So try to procure some, so that others may see that we are held in some estimation at Court, and may inspire them with hope for the future.

Something definite will soon be announced as to his lectures.² For you know yourself that he is a stranger and poor, for which reason he should receive more, and will certainly repay it in the future. Of that I am certain. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 29. 810.)

LXXXVIII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther announces that he preached publicly in Weimar and Erfurt, and will publish an exposition of Hosea ii.³

November 3, 1522.

I have no notes of what I preached in Weimar and Erfurt, and do not require to write them, for you know

¹ Bugenhagen.

² At first Bugenhagen lectured for nothing in his own house.

³ Not to be found.

all already, because I have taught nothing but faith and love there—except that I was asked in Weimar to make public what I had once preached about the kingdom of God and worldly authorities. It has been printed and dedicated to Prince John.

The passage Hosea ii. 19, “I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness,” etc., contains simply this—that we shall one day become the brides of the gracious, merciful, forgiving, and justifying God—not through works, but by the gospel.

As to Lengmann and Pomeranus, we shall do what we can.

In the translation of the Old Testament I have reached the third book of Moses (Leviticus). For it is incredible how I have been hindered by letter-writing, business matters, company, and many other things. Now I shall shut myself up at home, and hurry, so as to have Moses in the press by January. For we shall publish it separately, and afterwards the historic books, and lastly the prophets. For the size and the price of the books compel us to issue them piecemeal. Pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

(Walch, v. 15, Appendix.)

1523

Pope Hadrian died. Reformation progresses. The first martyrs, Heinrich Voes and Johann Esch, burned at Brussels. Birth year of the German hymn.

LXXXIX

TO HERZOG GEORGE OF SAXONY

Herzog George asked Luther if he really wrote to von Kronberg. Luther admitted he did.

January 3, 1523.

Cease fuming against God and His Christ, on account of what I have done, most ungracious Prince!

I have received your ungracious document, along with

my letter to von Kronberg, and have paid particular attention to the part of which you complain, as injuring your soul, honour, and good name. As you wish to know the meaning I attach to my words, I answer, that it is all one to me how your ungracious Highness may take them.

For, however I may act or speak against your ungracious Grace, whether secretly or openly, I consider I am entitled to do so, and mean to maintain the right.

For were you really in earnest, and did not tell so many lies as to injuring your soul, honour, and good name, you would not slander and persecute the truth so shamefully as you do. And this is not the first time that you have maligned me, so that I have more cause to complain of you. But I am silent as to all this, for Christ commands me to be kind to my enemies, and hitherto you have had my poor prayers and service, and if that be treating you with contempt then I can do no more, nor shall I be frightened by any water bubble. But if my Lord Jesus will, He can enlighten the heart of your most ungracious Highness, and turn you into a gracious and kind Prince towards me. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XC

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther promises to come to his wedding.

April 8, 1523.

Grace and peace ! I, Philip, the Provost, Dr. Hieronymus, Pommer, our Prior, and Jacob, and also James, will certainly come to your wedding, if the Lord will. Carlstadt is from home, but Hieronymus, Trappe, and Meister Lukas will also come. Whether the wives of the Provost and Hieronymus may accompany them is uncertain. I heard yesterday that nine nuns have left cloister Nimpschau, their prison, among whom are the two Sessatzers, and the Staupitz. May you prosper with your bride. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 15, Appendix 113.)

XCI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Hausmann, like Bugenhagen, had the gift of Church organisation, and insisted on the inseparable connection between doctrine and life. He died when preaching his first sermon in Freiberg in 1538. Deeply mourned by Luther.

May 24, 1523.

Grace and peace! This man returns to you, and brings as much as I could spare, but insisted upon having a letter to you. Do then as Christ teaches. As to the rest I am well in body, but outwardly so occupied with business, that my soul is well-nigh quenched for want of time to attend to it.

Pray that I may not be swallowed up by fleshly concerns. Greet all our companions in the faith, and may you prosper in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Walch, v. 21. 845.)

XCII

TO THREE BANISHED YOUNG LADIES

Luther comforts the three Freiberg young ladies who had been banished from Court for reading his books.

June 18, 1523.

To the honoured and virtuous Hanna von Draschwitz, Milia von Olsnitz, and Ursula von Feilitzin, my special friends in Christ. Grace and peace! Honoured ladies. Herr Nicolas von Amsdorf has told me of your disgrace because of my books, and begged me to write you a letter of consolation. But although I do not like writing to people I do not know, and you do not need comfort from me, still I could not refuse his request. First, I beg you, as a friend, to let your hearts rest in peace, and not wish evil to those who have brought this upon you, but "being reviled bless," as St. Paul says. And Christ says, "Bless them that curse you," etc., so do the same, seeing you are illumined by the grace of God, and they are blinded and are injuring their own souls by running against God, not seeing how they are destroying them-

selves, when they fancy they are injuring you. Only wait and let Christ manage matters. He will abundantly requite your reproach, and raise you even higher than you desire, if you commit your cause entirely to Him. And even if your conscience tell you that you are in fault, you must not despair on that account. For it is a precious sign that God has so soon led you to repentance. And reflect that if even you wished to injure them, you could accomplish nothing. For it is a sacred matter for which you suffer, which God will permit no one but Himself to revenge. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye," He says. I fancy that miserable blinded creature, Dr. Wolf Stehlin, is master there, but he will become entangled in a way he does not dream of in other matters. So act thus, my dear sisters, and the peace of God shall be with you. Amen! And take my letter in good part.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

XCIII

TO THE CHRISTIANS IN HOLLAND, BRABANT,
AND FLANDERS

Luther's first poetical effusion was in honour of the two martyrs Heinrich Voes and Johann Esch, Augustine monks.

July 1523.

Praise to the Father of mercies for permitting us anew to see His marvellous light, which has been hidden from us because of our sins. But the time has again come for the voice of the turtle to be heard in our land, and the flowers to appear on the earth. What a joy it is, dear ones, that you should yield us this great delight! For to you it has been given, not only to confess Christ, but to be the first to endure shame, imprisonment, and reproach for His name's sake, and now you have proved the strength of your faith by sealing your testimony with your blood. And also that Christ's two precious gems, Heinrich and Johann in Brussels, should have held their lives of so little account as to yield them up to His honour.

Oh, how shamefully were these two souls slain, but how gloriously shall they reappear with Christ, and judge

them by whom they have been unrighteously slaughtered. What pleasure the angels had in these two souls! How eagerly the fire freed them from this sinful life to open the door into everlasting glory! God be praised to all eternity that we have lived to see holy martyrs.

We up here have not yet been esteemed worthy to become such a precious offering to Christ, although many of us have not been without persecution, and are still enduring it.

Therefore, well beloved, let us be joyful in Christ, and render thanks for this great miracle which He has begun to work among us. Pray for us, and for one another, that we may reach out a helping hand to each other, and let all cleave with one mind to Christ our Head, who will strengthen you with His grace, and perfect you to the honour of His holy name, to whom be praise from all of us, to all eternity. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

XCIV

TO BARTIME VON STERNBERG

A peculiarly beautiful letter.

September 1, 1523.

Grace and peace in Christ! Most gracious sir. Vincent Wernsdorfer has persuaded me, a stranger, to write expressing my Christian sympathy with you in your trial. Therefore I trust your Excellency will graciously appreciate the motives which prompt me. He tells me how, since the departure of your dear consort to God, you have constantly occupied yourself with good works, particularly masses, vigils, etc., for the repose of her soul, thereby showing your love and loyalty to one who, through her life, certainly merited it; and he begged me to write you—a request I could not refuse, as it was meant for your Excellency's good.

You must recall Job's words, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" Thus must you sing to your loving God, who first bestowed such a faithful wife upon you, and has now

removed her. She was His before He gave her, and she is still His, even as we all are—now that He has taken her.

Therefore, although this is a great grief, that He has recalled His own, still the heart can find sweeter consolation in His most perfect will than in all His gifts—so to fulfil His will is something higher than to possess the best and noblest wife. Although one cannot feel this to be so, still faith does perceive it.

Therefore may God give you grace to be joyful, and acquiesce in the rich exchange you have made, having now, instead of a tender loving wife, the will of a tender loving God—and God Himself in addition.

Oh how blessed would we be if we could go on, making such exchanges with God! And we could do this if we understood how. For God meets us daily, but we are not ready to welcome Him. And I would beg of you, gracious sir, to cease from masses, vigils, and daily prayers for her soul. It is sufficient if your Excellency pray once or twice for her, for we are told that if we believe we shall receive what we pray for. Otherwise, if we always ask for one thing, it is a sign we do not believe God, and thus anger Him more through unbelieving prayer.

But I particularly beg you would leave off the vigils and masses for the soul, for it is most displeasing to God, there being neither reality nor faith in them, but a mere mummary.

Oh, people must pray otherwise if they wish anything from God. God ridicules such vigils—primarily, because God did not institute the mass for the dead, but as a sacrament for the living, and it is a dreadful thing for man to presume, without God's permission, to turn a sacrament for the living into a sacrifice for the dead. Beware of becoming a partner in this terrible error, which the priests and monks have instituted for the sake of their bellies.

For a Christian must do nothing that God has not commanded, and there is no command as to such masses and vigils, but it is solely their own invention, which brings in money, without helping either living or dead.

Your Excellency can inform yourself as to all these things by applying to the before-mentioned Wernsdorfer, who has a deep interest in you, impelling me to write you. . . .

May Christ illuminate and strengthen you in Christian faith and love towards your neighbours. Your Excellency's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XCX

TO NICOLAS GERBEL

Luther asks if Francis Lambert would be likely to find a living in Strassburg.

December 4, 1523.

Grace and peace ! Although this letter may be useless, my beloved Gerbel, I must write, as I heard you were in Strassburg at present. We have a Frenchman with us just now, Francis Lambert, who was a preacher among the apostolic Minorites, as they call them, and he has taken a wife here, and thinks he would be better off nearer France, and will not be advised, being so full of his own affairs.

I believe there are many with you not too prosperous, who feel more inclined to come here, than we have people wishing to go to you. But if I am to have any peace I must do him this favour.

Therefore pray say if there is any prospect of him earning sufficient to live upon. He is already pretty well versed in the Bible, although not up to our Barnabas and Paul. He hopes later to put my writings into French in order to make money on French soil.

Our Prince often presents him with silver money, and this year he has fleeced him of forty ducats.

If you do not reply, neither of us shall have any peace.

So you can see what I suffer from such people who, through me, become a burden to my good friends.

May you live prosperously with your wife.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Walch, 210.)

XCVI

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther expresses dislike of the famous or infamous Thomas Munzer.

December 26, 1523.

I begged the official of Alt-Stadt to beware of Munzer's spirit of prophecy. What has happened meantime I do not know, but I cannot endure such a spirit, whoever the man may be. He lauds my doctrine, and yet tries to tear it to bits. Then he talks and prays in such an insipid manner, using such unscriptural expressions, that any one would fancy he was mad or drunken. He insists upon an interview with me, and boasts beyond measure. I therefore begged the official to arrange a meeting with him, to discuss his teaching. I do not know if he will manage it. We are not of such a spirit that he need fear having his teaching put to the test. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

XCVII

TO JOHANN HESSE

Luther approves of Hesse's Latin paraphrasing of Ecclesiastes. This, the real birth-year of Church hymnary, mostly founded on the Psalms.

[*No date.*]

Grace and peace! Accept my greeting, thou preacher of Ecclesiastes, but see that you and he preach the same thing. For I too will hear his voice in you, and certainly read it. So send us your Commentary upon this book. It is desirable that it should be translated into the mother tongue; therefore I take the opportunity of admonishing you to this, in advance, that when the spirit moves you to the work you may let me know at once. I saw the man you sent me. It is no new thing, that many should wish to make the gospel a source of profit. In was so in St. Paul's days, and how much more in ours! Freedom is

regarded as a cloak for evil. But there is One who will speedily judge them. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

1524

First German Hymn-Book appeared. Peasants' War. Luther more distressed by this, and the disturbances caused in Wittenberg by the fanatics, than by Charles V. declaring that the Edict of Worms should be enforced.

XCVIII

TO LAMBERT THORN

The Augustinian monk, Thorn, suffered a martyr's death in the Netherlands.

January 19, 1524.

Grace and peace! Christ, who is with you, my dear brother, bears witness within me that you need no comfort from me. For He suffers, and is glorified; He is captive and reigns; He suffers violence, and yet triumphs both in and with you, having made you just and holy, through the knowledge of Himself, which is hidden from the world, but which He has so richly bestowed upon you.

Thereby you are not only strengthened inwardly by His Spirit in your affliction, but by the example of the two brothers, Heinrich and Johann. Both you and they have been a great comfort to me, and a sweet savour to all Christendom, and a glorious ornament to the gospel of Christ. Who knows why the Lord did not permit you to perish with them? Perhaps He spared you that He might do some mighty work through you. This encourages me much, that the faithful Saviour has not only permitted me to come to the knowledge of His truth, but has allowed me to see His grace flourishing so gloriously in you three.

I might deem this a misfortune, for it was I who first brought this teaching—for confessing which these two were burned, and you now sit in captivity—to the light of day. I fear I shall not be counted worthy to suffer such tribulation as you three for Christ's sake. Nevertheless, I shall comfort myself thus—that your bonds are my bonds,

your prison my prison, and your fire my fire. In addition, I shall preach, and openly confess, before the godless world, princes and angels, the Word for which these two were burned and you sit in captivity, and because of which I both suffer and rejoice with you. But the Lord Jesus, who has begun the good work in you, will perform it until the day of His glorious appearing. But pray for me, as I do for you, and remember you do not suffer alone, but He who says, "I will be with him in trouble; he shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name," suffers with you. Only wait upon Him who has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Do not dispute with Satan, but turn your eyes to the Lord. Be firmly rooted upon the pure faith, and never doubt that we shall be justified and sanctified through the precious blood of Christ, the spotless Lamb of God. Our works can as little make the man righteous, as they can be mistaken for Christ's blood—neither can they condemn us or lay sin to our charge. God be praised, in our Elector's land we have peace.

The Duke of Bavaria and the Bishop of Trier cause many to be slain, and banish some. There are other bishops and princes who are not bloodhounds, although they worry their people through threats, and do them much injury. So Christ is again despised of the people, whose member you now are, through the holy calling of our Father in heaven, and may He perfect this call in you, to His honour and glory. Amen.

All our people greet you, especially Jacob Praepösius, and the brethren from Antwerp, etc. They commend themselves to your prayers. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

XCIX

TO GEORGE BRÜCK, CHANCELLOR OF SAXONY

A marriage case. Luther complains of the unruly Carlstadt.

January 30, 1524.

Grace and peace! Most excellent Herr Chancellor. M. Wolfgang has told me of the sad separation case.

The man accuses his wife of wicked desertion, declaring he can prove he is blameless. But he has not done so as yet, so one must act according to Matt. xviii., as the man has hitherto been too modest to prove his wife's guilt in her presence, or bring forward the testimony of the whole town that she left her husband without cause. For it is not right to condemn her unheard, or without having convicted her of guilt.

It seems Ægidius of Erfurt only heard part of the matter, and then gave his opinion, which is even more contrary to the gospel than to law. In the next place, best of men, pray submit the following to your Prince at my request. Carlstadt has set up a printing-press at Jena in order to print what he pleases, desiring to indulge his weakness for teaching where he is not wanted, and maintaining a persistent silence where he has a call to act. Although this cannot do much injury to our ministerium, still it is apt to bring dishonour upon our Prince and University, as both have promised that nothing should be published without censorship by proper parties.

Seeing the Prince and we have kept the bargain, Carlstadt and his adherents cannot be allowed in the Prince's land to emancipate themselves from all authority. Would the Prince, therefore, order him to send any work to any censor he pleases, or suppress his undertaking, so that we may not come into bad odour through breaking our promise? Farewell in the Lord, and give my respects to the Prince.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

C

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

The first evangelical hymn-book appeared this spring in Wittenberg, containing eight hymns—four by Luther. "Aus tiefer Noth schrei ich zu Dir" (Ps. 130) was in this collection.

February 23, 1524.

Grace and peace! I write, dear Spalatin, only because I wished to write you. For you are sitting at Nürnberg as still as if you were in Rome, so that we do not

know whether you may not all be sound asleep, somewhere. I got a letter from you long ago, but now all is so quiet that we do not know whether to expect a Pope or a Diet.

But by Easter we expect that the princes will be so stirred up by their priests and father confessors that as a worthy way of celebrating the sacrament of the Lord Jesus they will begin a fresh persecution of the gospel.

I am waiting to hear if you have put some of the Psalms into metre as I suggested. Everything goes well here.

The translation of Job gives us immense trouble on account of its exalted language, which seems to suffer even more, under our attempts to translate it, than Job did under the consolations of his friends, and seems to prefer to lie among the ashes.

Evidently the author never wished it to be translated. Meanwhile this hinders the printing of the third part of the Bible. Do write and let us know what is going on in the world. May all go well with you, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Walch, 210. 886.)

C1

TO THE ELECTOR FREDERICK OF SAXONY

Luther wishes Melanchthon to be set apart to expound the Holy Scriptures.

March 23, 1524.

Grace and peace in Christ! Most Serene High-born Prince, etc. Doubtless your Grace knows that by the grace of God we have many promising youths among us, from distant lands, all thirsting for the Word of God, while enduring many hardships, some living merely on bread and water. Now I have been urging M. Philip to lecture on the Holy Scriptures, because he is so much better qualified to do so than I. For although I would gladly do it, it would necessitate my giving up the translation of the Bible into German. But whenever we plead with him to do so—the whole University desiring it—he defends himself thus, that he was appointed and is paid by your

Grace to teach Greek, and must do so. Therefore I am requested by all to beg your Electoral Grace, for the sake of the dear young people, and for the furtherance of God's Word, to see if it be not possible to have his salary directed for the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, as there are many young people qualified to teach Greek ; and it is not seemly that his time should be taken up with elementary teaching, while higher work, which might produce much fruit, and could not be repaid with money, be left undone. Would we had more who were thus fitted to lecture, for, alas, there are enough who think themselves able, and occupy the place of others, because they happen to be there.

But the time will come, as was formerly the case, when such work, no matter how unwillingly, must be left undone for the want of the right people to do it.

Hence we must now train people while we can, and do our utmost for our successors, and if it be your Grace's good pleasure, I beg you to bind over the said Philip to lecture on the Bible, even if he require a larger salary to do so. I commend your Electoral Grace to the tender mercies of God. Amen. Your Grace's obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CII

TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Luther turns lovingly to Erasmus, and forgives him for his want of courage in espousing his cause.

April 1524.

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ ! I have remained silent long enough, dear Herr Erasmus, waiting till you, as the greater and elder, should break the silence, but having waited so long in vain, charity impels me to take up my pen.

I do not reproach you for having kept aloof from us, knowing you did not wish to complicate the cause you were maintaining against my enemies the Papists. And I even have not taken it greatly amiss, that in order to conciliate the favour of some, or instigate the fury of others,

you have issued pamphlets in which you attack us with a bitterness we did not expect from you. For we perceive that you have not been endued by God with such steadfastness and courage that you can confidently go forward with us to combat this monstrosity—hence we do not expect what is beyond your ability to render. But we have borne your weakness patiently, and highly appreciated your gifts.

For the whole world must confess that it is through you there has been such a revival in letters, through which people have got access to the Bible in its purity, and that you possess great and glorious talents, for which we must ever be grateful. Hence I have never wished you to mingle in our affairs, to the detriment of your gifts; for although your common sense and eloquence might accomplish much, still, if you do not heartily enter into it, it is better that you should only serve God with the talent committed to you. But I fear our enemies might persuade you to condemn our doctrine, and then we would have to contradict you to the face. We have hitherto prevented some entering into conflict with you through their writings, therefore I wished that Hutten's challenge had not appeared, and still less your Schwamm,¹ which, without doubt, you have learned for yourself. How easy it is to talk of modesty, and blame Luther for want of it; and, on the other hand, how difficult, nay, impossible it is to act accordingly, except through a special gift of the Spirit. If I, who am easily moved to wrath, have often in the heat of the moment written too bitingly (*beizend*), I have only done it to stubborn people. And I can testify that my tenderness towards the godless, no matter how unjust and stupid they may be, has not only the testimony of my own conscience, but has been experienced by many. Up till now I have held my pen in check, in spite of your conduct towards me, and have also written to friends, that I would restrain myself till you attacked me openly.

For although you were not of us, and rejected some of the principal points pertaining to everlasting blessedness, or hypocritically refused to give your opinion on the

¹ Erasmus's defence against von Hutten's challenge.

matter, still I shall not accuse you of obstinacy. What am I to do? The business is a bad one on both sides. If I be mediator, I would ask these people to give up assailing you, and permit you, at your advanced age, to fall asleep in peace in the Lord. They would do this if they considered your weakness and the magnitude of the question at stake, which is far above your head.

But you, too, dear Erasmus, must remember their weakness, and not practise your powers of sarcasm on them, and where you cannot or dare not espouse our opinions, then leave them alone, patiently awaiting the success of your cause. I say all this, excellent Herr Erasmus, to prove my earnest wish that the Lord may give you a mind worthy of your great name, and if He delay doing this, I beg of you only to be a spectator of our tragedy, and not unite with our opponents, nor write against me, seeing I shall not publish anything against you. As to those who complain of suffering because of Luther, remember they are men, even as you and I, upon whom we should have compassion, bearing one another's burdens. There has been more than enough backbiting, so we must see that we are not devoured one of another.

This would be a most pitiable spectacle, as on neither side is any one really at heart an enemy of the gospel of Christ. Take my child-like simplicity in good part, and may you prosper in the Lord. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CIII

TO JOHANN ŒCOLAMPADIUS

Luther expresses satisfaction at the decision of the Council at Basle against the Bishop's vicar.

April 1524.

Grace and peace! I have nothing to write, dear brother, except to greet you, and commend myself to your prayers.

Joachim, our trusted friend, will tell you everything.

I do not know whether Philip will come to us with the accused, whom I should like to see.

I have written Erasmus, expressing a desire for peace and unity, so that this melancholy spectacle may come to an end, and you will do your best to achieve this.

We have had enough of disputing, and both of us have lost our tempers, so it is high time that Christ should come to the rescue, and compel Satan to make way for the Holy Ghost.

The decision of the Council and magistrates of Basle against the Bishop's vicar has delighted me beyond measure. And pray for me. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

CIV

TO JACOB STRAUSS, PREACHER IN EISENACH

Luther now begins to interest himself in education.

April 25, 1524.

Grace and peace! You must not imagine, best of men, that I have not the highest opinion of you; for, I know, through the glorious power of the gospel, that we have been raised above everything else. . . . I beseech you to lay to heart the instruction of the young; for the gospel is threatened with untold evils through neglecting this duty. It is one of the most important duties. Greet Schalb and Schultetus in my name. I would have written them, but it is incredible how I am overwhelmed with all sorts of work, scarcely being able to overtake my correspondence, not to mention other things. The globe seems to rest on my head, so that I wish either to die or be borne away from the world, in order not to be quite annihilated. Greet your wife and child, and smile sweetly upon them in my name.

Bear with your weak health, as is seemly, seeing you are in God's hand. Pray for poor me, and farewell. St. Mark's Day, without celebrations or procession.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CV

TO NICOLAS GERBEL

Luther rejoices that the gospel is dominant in Strassburg.

May 6, 1524.

Grace and peace in the Lord! Although I have nothing to say, dear Gerbel, I could not let the messenger leave without sending love to the brethren in the Lord, and commending myself to your prayers.

For I hear that the Word of God prevails with you. With us, the more hindrances that are put in its way the more it spreads. It has now reached Magdeburg and Bremen, and will soon be in Brunswick, I hope, as Prince Henry, who was once its bitter enemy, is now a changed man. Satan has founded another sect among us, who are neither acknowledged by the Papists nor by our own people. They boast that they are animated by celestial spirits, and are independent of the witness of the Spirit within them.

From this we may perceive that our word is the Word of God, for it suffers not only from violence, but from fresh heresies. May God grant you and your loved ones health. Greet all in the Lord. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Walch, 210.)

CVI

TO WOLFGANG CAPITO

Luther denies that Bucer and he are not friendly, etc. Capito was Praepositus in St. Thomas's Church, Strassburg.

May 25, 1524.

Grace and peace in the Lord! If you and Bucer did not so persistently declare that some people said your actions were condemned by us, and that we differed entirely in opinion from you, I would attribute this to your weakness and jealousy on account of our silence; for the letter which the brothers brought three days ago declared the same thing.

But seeing Christ reigns in you, you have nothing to

fear, although our opinions might differ from yours, or that we should despise those you hold.

Still, it is almost unbearable for me to hear that our differences have been the topic of conversation, especially when such perfect unanimity of spirit reigns among us. This is specially trying to me, for I gladly conceal and overlook, as much as I can, any difference of opinion among ourselves; hence how much less dare I put up with these suspicions which are thrown upon our Christianity and spiritual peace? Therefore, if I were not so much occupied, I would, through the public press, expose such lies, and prove that in the things pertaining to Christ we are at one.

I am delighted to hear of the marriages of the priests, monks, and nuns among you; and that the former are now husbands in defiance of Satan, and am pleased when they get livings. What more shall I say? Am sorry I have heard nothing further of you. Go on and prosper, for all bear witness to your wonderful teaching; the people being struck down under it amid the enemies of the King.

I think, hitherto, too much consideration has been allowed for the weak; so, as they are daily becoming more hardened, one must speak plainly to them.

For some day I shall cast aside the cowl, which I have hitherto worn, to strengthen the weak, and turn the Pope into ridicule. They are blind leaders of the blind.

I believe the report of our dissensions has arisen out of my letters to you translated into German. It is enough to terrify me from writing when they are immediately borne away to the printers against my will; for among close friends one writes more confidentially than it would be advisable to spread abroad.

But then you were a different man, and a courtier, while now you are Christ's freeman, and a servant of the gospel, and belonging to me, and I to you. Greet M. Bucer from me in Christ, with his dear wife and children, and all the recently made husbands, especially Hedio. Our Church greets you. Grace be with you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—Please apologise to Bucer and the others for not answering their letters. I shall write when I have time.

(Walch, v. 21. 900.)

CVII

TO JOHANN ŒCOLAMPADIUS

Luther praises him for having quitted the monkish life.

June 20, 1524.

Grace and peace in Christ! I beg you, dearest Œcolampadius, not to ascribe my not writing to you to ingratitude or sloth; for I have not heard from you since you quitted your order, and fancied that since Christ had strengthened your heart through the power of the Spirit, you had overcome your superstitious conscience, and were now too great to write me, or need a letter from me. Truly, I highly approve of the praiseworthy step you have taken, and Philip never ceases speaking of you, and rejoices that you keep him in remembrance.

May the Lord strengthen you in your great undertaking—the exposition of Isaiah—although I know Erasmus takes no pleasure therein. But do not let his displeasure disturb you. He has performed the task to which he was called—he has reinstated the ancient languages, thus defrauding godless learning of their crowds of admirers. Perhaps, like Moses, he will die in the land of Moab, for he is powerless to guide men to those higher studies which lead to divine blessedness. I rejoiced when he ceased expounding the Scriptures; for he was not equal to the task. He has done enough in exposing the evils of the Church, but cannot remedy them, or point the way to the promised land. Take my prolixity in good part.

I know you do not need my consolation, for Christ will not forsake you. Pray for me, for I am so occupied with outward things that my health is in as great danger of being injured as my spirit. The monks and nuns who have left their cloisters rob me of many hours, for I am expected to find homes for them all, etc. Farewell, dear

Œcolampadius. The grace of Christ be with you ! Greet all who are of one mind with us.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1166.)

CVIII

TO HIERONYMUS BAUMGÄRTNER, NÜRNBERG

A young patrician, who studied at Wittenberg.

October 12, 1524.

Grace and peace in the Lord ! I must ask your services, dear Hieronymus, on behalf of this poor young man, Gregorius Keser. He wishes to settle, and asked me to introduce him to some one in Nürnberg. Although I could not give him much hope, for I know every place is full, still I bade him God-speed, in God's name, who feeds the ravens. Moreover, if you intend marrying Katherine von Bora, make haste before she is given to some one else, for C. Glatz, pastor in Orlamunde, is ready waiting. She has not yet got over her love for you. I wish that you two were married. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

(Walch, v. 21. 917.)

CIX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther dissuades Spalatin from leaving the Court, and resigning his post, unless he wishes to marry.

November 30, 1524.

Grace and peace ! As you ask my advice as to leaving Court, dear Spalatin, I would say : You have perhaps cause to do so, but unless you have some other reason for giving up your post, the wrongdoing of others does not justify your doing it, if it be not the idea of marriage,¹ which is driving you away ; and I can think of nothing else, especially as you are so at home at Court, and so useful to many princes ; and if some one else got your situation, how much he would have to learn ! And even if your wish were accomplished, it would be long before

¹ Spalatin married the following year.

the Prince could have the same confidence in any other, you having been so long with him.

Therefore remain, leaving only to marry. I fancy you are substituting another reason for the true one, but I see no object in this, for it must become public when it takes place. You can thank Argula von Staupitz¹ for what she writes about marrying. I cannot wonder at people gossiping about me when they do it about others. But tell her from me that I am in the hands of the Lord, as His creature, whose heart He can turn whither He will.

But according to my present frame of mind I have no intention of marrying, not that I am insensible to the emotions of the flesh, being neither wood nor stone, but because I have no desire to, and daily expect to die a heretic's death. However, I shall not limit the power of the Lord working in me, nor depend on the stability of my own heart. But I hope He will soon take me away. Farewell, and pray for me. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Walch, v. 21.)

CX

TO KATHERINE SCHÜTZIN

Luther congratulates this excellent lady on her marriage to the famous preacher, Matthew Zell, in Strassburg.

December 17, 1524.

To the virtuous Katherine Schützin, my dear sister in Christ, Strassburg. Grace and peace!

My dear friend. I wish you joy in having so richly received the grace of God, so that you not only behold His kingdom (which is hidden from so many), but that He has given you such a husband, from whom you can learn all that is good. I wish you grace and strength to enjoy this good gift with gratitude till that day comes when we shall all meet and rejoice together, if God will. Pray for me, and greet your lord Herr Matthew Zell from me. I commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

¹ A warm friend of the Reformation.

CXI

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther again begs him to help him with Church hymns.

1524.

Grace and peace! I wish to follow the example of the prophets and Church fathers, and compose German Psalms for the people; that is, spiritual songs, so that the Word of God may dwell among them through the hymn.

Therefore, we are seeking poets everywhere. Hence, you being such a master of the German tongue and so eloquent, I beg you to lend a hand here, and turn one of these Psalms into a hymn, according to this pattern.

But avoid Court terms, to enable the common people to understand the words, which must flow smoothly, and the language be pure. But free scope is allowed, and if one understand his work, he can express himself as he will. I have not this gift, and would not be pleased with my own work.

Therefore I shall search if a Heman, an Asaph, or a Jeduthum can be found anywhere.

I shall also ask Johann Dolzig, he being rich in words and eloquent; so you will do your part when you have leisure. Meantime, you have my seven Penitential Psalms, with the exposition thereupon, from which you can gather their meaning; or, if you prefer me to point out the Psalms you should take, the first might be, "Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger," "Lord, hear my prayer," the second.

And John Dolzig might paraphrase, "Happy is the man," for I have already translated "Aus tiefer Noth" (130th Psalm). But if these be too difficult, take "Rejoice in the Lord," 33rd Psalm, or Psalm 103. Write which I shall leave for you.

May you prosper in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther sends specimen of new edition of the New Testament, and begs for an income for Bugenhagen.

1524.

Grace and peace! Here you have the whole of the New Testament for yourself and the Elector, except the preface to the Romans, which will be ready to-morrow.

I also send a copy to the young Prince (John Frederick), which you may praise to your heart's content.

Lukas Cranach and Christian counsel this. I fancy Wolfgang Stein has already sent one for the old Prince (Johann).

And I hope you will undertake to persuade the Elector to bestow one of the bursaries, or stipends, on Johann Pomeranus, which was so badly bestowed upon the sophist; for, next to Philip, he is the first theological lecturer in the town, indeed, in the whole world. I am most anxious to keep him here, for it is said—and it is true—they wish to have him in Erfurt, and who knows how long I may be allowed to remain! More of this again. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 466.)

1525

In this year Frederick the Wise died in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. John the Steadfast was a warm friend to Luther. Luther finishes lecturing on Deuteronomy. Luther married in June. Peasant revolt.

CXIII

TO JOHN BRISMANN, KÖNIGSBERG

Luther sent Brismann to Königsberg to promote the Reformation in Prussia, which he did.

January 11, 1525.

Grace and peace in the Lord! It is the letter-carrier's fault, my Brismann, that you have not heard from me, and I almost lost this chance also.

Carlstadt, who is quite given over to the devil, rages against me, having issued various writings full of poison. He, with his followers, denies that the body and blood of Christ are present in the Sacrament. I am ready to confute him, although through artifice, as he has led many astray in different places.

I shall answer Erasmus as soon as I have leisure.

That Amand has forsaken our party does not grieve me ; perhaps I am rather glad, as he seems to be animated with Carlstadt's spirit. Our Henry von Zutphen, the Bremen evangelist, was hanged and burned with cruel fanaticism in Dietmarschen. These prophets' turbulent doings prevent me getting on with my Deuteronomy.

All else pursues its everyday course. We have received the highly esteemed Peter Weller with joy.

Thomas Munzer is meandering about, uncertain where to settle. He made a dangerous disturbance in Mühlhausen. The prophets are increasing steadily, a trial for true believers. The Papists rejoice over our differences, but God will expose Carlstadt in His own time.

For it seems as if Carlstadt despaired of becoming a partaker of Christ's kingdom, and has cast himself away, in order to plunge many others into destruction, and with a great following hurry on to hell, which he has been actually heard to declare.

Pray for me, and remember me with the highest esteem to Herr Bishop. I am much occupied, and over and above am a prisoner through a burning abscess on the thigh.

Perhaps you do not yet know that Anna Graswitzinn von Sausselitz, with three others, Barbara Beckenberg, Catherine Taubenheim, and Margaretha Zirstorf, have escaped from their prison. The first of these remained here, and married Hans Scheidewind.

She desires me to send you her compliments. Herzog George himself undertook to visit the cloister, and seeing the abominable excesses, at once banished the brothers, fathers, bridegrooms, or rather relations of those noble ladies, from the place. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXIV

TO THE ABBOT FRIEDRICH OF NÜRNBERG

Luther congratulates him on his marriage.

January 17, 1525.

Grace and peace! I have delayed wishing you happiness on your marriage, esteemed sir, and am sure you believed I had cause for this, and I had. I have been ill, and had books to publish, letters to write, friends to help, etc., and, in addition, the things most nearly concerning the house and Church—not to speak of the worries caused by Satan and my enemies.

But I have remembered you in my prayers, and rejoiced over your happiness, and trust you may receive much blessing in this estate ordained of God, and therefore see clearly that it has been instituted by Him who will maintain it to His own glory.

For where were the kingdoms and rulers of the world when Adam and the patriarchs lived simply as married men? For how many kingdoms have come and gone since then, and marriage continues over all?

Therefore, thank God for bestowing this privilege upon you, and conducting you out of the stormy billows into the haven, and from the world into Paradise. In such a relation there may be trouble in the flesh at times, as St. Paul says, but there is consolation of the spirit, and, as Solomon says, he will receive joy from the Lord.

And why are the powers that be so averse to marriage? Is it not because they dread the troubles which may ensue? The world is cowardly enough to avoid it for that reason, but by and by they will most surely experience that evil in themselves which they always considered peculiar to matrimony.

May Christ give us a better spirit, and enable us to overcome tribulation, disregarding drawbacks, because of the many benefits it brings with it.

Many so love a little glory or worldly advantage that they are insensible to the countless evils of celibacy.

They resemble the soldier who is so prodigal of his life,

yet prizes a golden gulden more than his temporal and spiritual welfare.

So let us enjoy present blessings, that when misfortune comes we may consider it a blessing in disguise.

My pen runs away with me when I extol God's works.

May the Lord bless you, and ever remember me in prayer.

Give my kindest regards to your Frederika, but in Latin ; the rest she will understand for herself. Written in great haste at supper, so forgive me if I have eaten too much, or been too prolix. . . . MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21.)

CXV

TO FREDERICK MYCONIUS IN GOTHA

This letter acted like the dew of the morning on his friend.

May 3, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ, who has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but in me ye shall have peace. Be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world."

I write this to you, dear Frederick, as one stranger to another, because I would gladly share with you all the consolation I enjoy in Christ.

So, seeing that Christ has overcome the world, then all which is done, except by Him, is mere outward show ; and the victory is His alone, and His will be the glory, when the world with all its pomp has passed away.

No one who believes in Christ can really doubt this.

I pray Him to counsel you with His Spirit, and strengthen you and yours by His Almighty power.

Persevere, dear Frederick, in the Lord. Greet and admonish my Basil in the Lord. MARTIN LUTHER.

WEIMAR.

(Walch, v. 21. 496.)

CXVI

TO THE MAGISTRATES OF DANTZIC

So early as 1518 the new teaching was proclaimed in Dantzic, and Johannes Knade, preacher in the Marien Church, married

that year. Luther wrote of the "wondrous things Christ had done in Dantzic" in 1521.

May 5, 1525.

Grace and peace through Christ our Saviour! Honoured dear sirs and friends. In accordance with your request I have done my best to send you an able preacher. But it was not to be that you were to have Johann Pomeranus, for whom you asked, and whom I would have gladly sent to you.

But our congregation here would not part with him, wishing to retain such as he to train others who may do good service in other towns.

So I send M. Michael Hänlein, an excellent and learned man, whose equal I do not know, and hope that you will cherish him, and like him the better the longer you know him. I commend him to your tender care and wisdom, seeing that he leaves us to go into a strange land.

And I hope you will attend to his bodily comforts in a Christian manner, as Christ and St. Paul so often inculcate, "They which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple," and "They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

I beseech you also, my dear sirs and friends, do and suffer everything in order to preserve peace among yourselves, and to prevent fanatics getting in among you, who, alas, have done much mischief among us in North Germany, as your Excellencies may perhaps have heard.

If there be anything to alter or destroy, such as pictures, or whatever it may be, see that it take place through an order from the Council, and do not let the mob attack them, which has happened elsewhere, and which has led to the magistracy being held in contempt, whom God commands to be feared and honoured.

But in particular, see that you are not taught to bear rule according to the law of Moses, and still less according to the gospel, which is a spiritual law, and must be kept entirely apart from a worldly government, and proclaimed through the mouths of the preachers.

And no one must be coerced in spiritual matters, each exercising his own free will as to what he shall believe;

for, it is not the sword which must bear rule here, but the spirit of God. I have discussed all these matters with your pastor, Herr Michael, who will instruct you, and whom you must obey. I commend you to God, who will strengthen and prosper you, to His praise and honour.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CXVII

TO JOHN FREDERICK OF SAXONY, CALLED THE
MAGNANIMOUS

Letter of consolation on the death of his uncle, Frederick the Wise.

May 15, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ! I must try to console your Grace when the Almighty has so tried us; for we have not only lost peace in the land, but also our head, of whom we stand greatly in need at present. God is wonderful in His working, sending at once misfortune, and then removing it, so that we may strengthen ourselves in Him, singing with Christ in the Psalter, "I am desolate and afflicted." But we must remain steadfast. It is impossible the old Adam should not suffer through all this, being too weak to bear the trial, but the inner man finds comfort in God's words that He is nigh unto those that are of a broken heart. There can be no other consolation than God's Word, which bids us trust and call upon Him in all our affliction: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee," etc.; and again, "I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver and honour him," and such like sweet loving words, of which the Psalms are full.

And, indeed, our Prince's death has nothing mournful in it in itself, for it seems as if God had taken him away, like King Josiah, from the evil in the world, because he ruled in a peaceable, quiet way, deserving his name "Friedrich" (peace).

And one rejoices when such peace-loving souls are not forced to live on amid such confusion, which would grieve us more than to see his last days passed amid war.

Still it is a great affliction, and we hope God will abundantly compensate us for the great loss. Amen.

I have tried to prove my devotion in this letter, although I believe your Grace is too firmly rooted in Christ to need any encouragement from me, and I pray as time passes there may be even less need of it. I herewith commend myself to your Grace.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

CXVIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN OF SAXONY, SURNAMED
THE STEADFAST

The first German Prince who died in the Evangelical faith.

May 15, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ! Serene Prince. If able to write at all I have good cause to do so, seeing the Almighty has taken our gracious lord, your Grace's brother, from us in such trying times, leaving us to mourn his loss, which falls heaviest upon you, so that with the Psalmist you may exclaim, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about : they are more than the hairs of my head ; therefore my heart faileth me."

But God is faithful, and does not let His wrath rest on those who trust in Him, but inspires them with courage, enabling them again to exclaim with the Psalmist, "The Lord hath chastened me sore : but he hath not given me over unto death" ; and once more, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous : but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." And Christ Himself says : "In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world."

This is the school in which God chastens His people, and teaches them to trust Him, so that their confidence may not always hover on the tongue, but in the heart.

Your Electoral Grace is most surely in this school also, and doubtless God has removed the head in order that He Himself may take His place, and teach you to derive strength and consolation solely from His goodness and

power, which is far above all human love and consolation. I have hurriedly written all this to comfort you. May you graciously receive it, and delight yourself more and more in the Psalter and the Holy Scriptures, which are full of all sorts of consolation. I herewith commit you to God. Your Electoral Grace's obedient,

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXIX

To JOHN RÜHEL

Luther's brother-in-law, a lawyer in Mansfeld. The peasant insurrection endangered the Reformation more than anything else had ever done. About the Elector's death.

May 15, 1525.

To the learned John Rühel, my good, kind brother-in-law. God's grace and peace! I thank you, dear sir, for your last news, which I was glad to hear, especially about Munzer. I should like to hear how he was taken prisoner, and how he behaved, for it is well to know how such haughty spirits act. That the poor creature should be so treated is pitiable. But what can we do? and it is God's will that fear should be instilled into the people. If this were not done, then Satan would do even more mischief. The one misfortune is preferable to the other. It is the judgment of God. He who takes the sword shall perish by the sword. So it is a consolation that this spirit should be made manifest, to let the peasants see how badly they have acted, and perhaps they may cease plotting and improve. Do not take all this so to heart, for it may be for the good of many souls, who, through fear, may desist.

My gracious lord, the Elector, died between five and six on the day I left you, just as they were desolating Osterhausen. He passed quietly away, retaining his senses to the last, having partaken of the sacrament in both forms, but without extreme unction. His funeral was a most imposing sight, although we performed no masses or vigils over him. Some stones were found in his lungs, and three elsewhere, which was strange. So he

really died of stone. He did not know much about the insurrection; but wrote to his brother, Prince John, that he must use every means to pacify the people before he resorted to arms.

His was a Christ-like and blessed death.

The signs of his death were a rainbow which Philip and I saw one night last winter over the Lochau, and a child was born here in Wittenberg without a head.

I herewith commit you to God, and greet your vine (*Hansreben*) with her fruit (*Trauben*). Also comfort Christofel Meinhardt, and beg him to suffer the will of God, which can only promote our highest welfare, although we are not yet aware of it. Now is the time to keep quiet and let God act, and soon we shall see peace. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

CXX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther's marriage had really taken place on 13th June. He now invites Spalatin to the wedding feast.

June 16.

Grace and peace! Do not forget, dear Spalatin, that my marriage will be on Wednesday, and the great banquet at mid-day. Therefore see that the game does not arrive too late, but let us have it in time, by to-morrow evening, if possible.

For I wish the whole entertainment to be over in one day. I write this to you, for L. Koppe did not gather from my letter that you were not in the same position. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21.)

CXXI

TO LEONHARDT KOPPE OF TORGAEU

It was Koppe who rescued the nine nuns from the cloister near Grimma, among whom was Katherine von Bora.

June 17, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ! I wish you to read this very depressing letter, honoured sir, to see if you know

of no one who could help in this matter, for it is too much to expect one in your high position to do so. If you know of none, then return the letter, so that I may seek help elsewhere, for I am quite unhappy about the two children.

Most worthy Father Prior, you know what has happened to me, viz. that the nun that with God's help you carried off from the nunnery two years ago is nevertheless returning to the cloister, not this time, however, to take the veil, but as the honoured wife of Dr. Luther, who, up till now, has lived alone in the old empty monastery of St. Augustine at Wittenberg. So pray come to my home-coming, which is on the Tuesday after St. John's festival, but without any wedding present.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXXII

TO JOHANN VON DOLTZIG, ELECTORAL CHANCELLOR.

Invitation to feast and request for game which the Elector sent through Spalatin.

June 21, 1525.

To the excellent Johann Doltzig. My gracious lord and good friend!

Doubtless the outcry has reached your ears that I have actually ventured to enter the married state.

Although my change of condition seems very strange to myself, being as yet scarcely able to believe it, still the fact is attested by so many honoured witnesses that I must believe it to be true, and in order to put the seal of certainty upon it, I am giving a collation next Tuesday, and expect my father and mother and other good friends (Link of Altenburg, Amsdorf of Magdeburg, Rühel from Thüringen, Müller from Mansfeld, Koppe from Torgau, Spalatin, etc. etc.). Therefore I beg of you, in a friendly manner, if it be not burdensome to you, to see that we are supplied with game, and to be present yourself, to help to imprint with joy the seal upon the transaction, and all that appertaineth thereto. I herewith commit you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXXIII

TO KING HENRY VIII. OF ENGLAND

This letter was written by request of the fugitive King Christian of Denmark.

September 1, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ our Lord! Most Serene King. Although I might well fear to write your Majesty, having deeply offended you through my little book hurriedly written at the instigation of people unfriendly to your Royal Highness, still I am impelled to do so by your natural goodness of heart, which I hear daily praised, and also knowing that your Majesty, being aware he is mortal, will not keep an undying enmity, and over and above, I am informed by trustworthy people that the little book against me, so far beneath the dignity of the King of England, issued under your Majesty's name, was not really written by you, as those crafty sophists dare affirm. They surely do not know the danger of thus dishonouring your royal name, and bringing into notice that monstrosity, hated of both God and man, the Cardinal of Eborack, the destroyer of your Majesty's kingdom. And through shame I can scarcely raise my eyes towards you for having been swayed by such wicked people against so mighty a potentate, compared to whom I am a very worm.

Further, contemptible as I am, still I am prompted to write, because your Majesty was well disposed to the gospel to begin with, which news was a very evangelium to my heart, that is, tidings of great joy.

Therefore, I throw myself at your Majesty's feet with my writings, entreating forgiveness for the sake of Christ's sufferings, and to be told how I have offended you, even as Christ commanded us to forgive one another. And in the next place, if your Majesty be agreeable, I shall issue another book to the honour of your name in contradiction of the last.

For, although I am a mere nobody compared to your Majesty, still I feel it would be no injury to the gospel,

nor to the glory of God, were I to write on gospel subjects to His Royal Grace of England.

God grant that He may perfect in you the good work He has begun, so that you may obey the gospel with all your heart, and shut your ears to those poisonous tongues and soft-spoken hypocrites who decry Luther as a heretic. But rather say, "What ill can Luther teach when he only maintains that we attain to everlasting blessedness through faith in the Son of God, who suffered, died, and rose again for us, as the Gospels and apostles' writings testify?" For this is the corner-stone of my doctrine, after which I teach brotherly love and obedience to the powers that be, and crucifixion of the flesh, as Christ taught. So what is wrong in such doctrines? One must wait and listen, and then judge. Why should I be condemned without being refuted? I would also punish the tyranny of the bishops, who twist the articles of our Christian faith, meantime striving after dividends, pomp, sensuality—nay, even kingdoms, principalities, etc.,—so that no one can wonder that even the common man sees and condemns it. Let them repent, that they may not be hated and punished.

Your Majesty must see for yourself how many Princes in Germany, as well as town councils, and highly intellectual people, are unwilling, God be praised, to permit the gospel doctrines which I have brought to light to be condemned. Would to God that Christ may class you among this number. Is it any wonder that the Emperor and some Princes rage against me? (Ps. ii. 2).

Is it not almost a miracle when a king or prince loves the gospel? Oh, how I long to be able to rejoice over such a miracle in your Majesty! Would that God, before whom I write this, would endue my words with power, so that the King of England may, ere long, become a devoted disciple of the Lord Christ and a confessor of the gospel, and also Luther's most gracious lord. Amen. If it please your Majesty, I await a favourable answer. Your Majesty's obedient,

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXXIV

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN OF SAXONY

Luther begs the Elector to espouse the cause of the University.

September 15, 1525.

To my most gracious lord, etc. Grace and peace in Christ! Although I with others have entire confidence in your Electoral Grace's gracious promise regarding our University, yet we cannot but see how its fulfilment is being hindered through many needful things, especially the Diet, therefore I would humbly beg you to send either Doltzig or some one else, or give directions in writing that matters here should be inquired into—for many classes have gone down, while others are unpaid—the teachers having gone away, so that it will soon be impossible to keep those going that remain. For the treasury is empty, hence longer delay will be fatal. I felt I could not keep your Grace in ignorance of all this. I believe the University intends writing your Grace itself. I commit you to God. Your Grace's obedient,

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXXV

AN ADMONITION TO THE PRINTERS IN NÜRNBERG

September 26, 1525.

Grace and peace! What is all this, dear sirs, that one should openly rob and steal what belongs to the other, thus ruining one another? Have you now become street robbers and thieves? Or do you really imagine that God will bless and cause you to prosper through such knavery? I have gone on with the postils up till Easter, when they were secretly abstracted from the printing-press by the compositor, who maintains himself by the sweat of our brow, and who himself conveyed my writings to your most estimable town, where they were hurriedly printed and sold before the whole was finished, to the great detriment of all concerned. But I would even have put up with all this injury, had

they not treated my books as they did—printing them so hurriedly and falsely—that when they reach my hands I scarcely know them to be mine. Some bits are left out, here they are displaced, there falsified, and other parts not corrected. And they have learned the art of writing Wittenberg on the top of some which have never seen Wittenberg. This is downright knavery. So let every one beware of the postils for the six Sabbaths, and let them sink into oblivion, for I do not acknowledge them as mine. Therefore take warning, my dear printers, who thus steal and rob. Other towns on the Rhine—Strassburg, etc., do not do this; and even if they did, it would not harm us so; for their publications do not reach us in the same way as yours do, being so much nearer. For you know what St. Paul says to the Thessalonians: “That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such.” One day you will experience this. Should not a Christian out of brotherly love wait for a month or two before he copies his work? We have put up with this till it has become unbearable, and has prevented us going on with the printing of the prophets, as we do not wish to see them spoiled, so greed and envy are delaying the spread of the Divine Word, and the fault lies at your door. Indulge your greed as much as you will, till we Germans are called brutes, but pray do not do so in the name of God. The judgment will most surely descend. May better times soon come. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXXVI

TO LEONHARDT BEIER

Luther asks Beier's intercession for a daughter.

October 8, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ! Among the other maidens who lately escaped from the cloister, and who are staying with me, is a certain Gertrude von Mylen, whose mother or grandmother lives beside you in Guben, to whom she writes by this messenger. Now it is your duty to

admonish her to receive her daughter or grand-daughter, or if she refuse to do so, I shall see to her trousseau, which might perhaps afterwards offend her. Farewell, and pray for me. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CXXVII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Four young noblemen, who blamed Luther for their sister's escape from their convent, were lying in wait to murder him.

November 11, 1525.

Dear Spalatin—Gladly would I be present at your wedding to rejoice with you, but a hindrance has come in the way, which I cannot overcome, viz. the tears of my wife, who believes you would be deeply grieved were my life imperilled. She has a presentiment that my life is in danger, having dreamed last night that murderers were looking out for me on the way. I think this not unlikely, since I hear that the rescue of the Freiberg nuns has roused the wrath of the nobles in Herzog George's lands.

Although well aware that, wherever I may be, I am under the Almighty's protection, without whom not a hair of my head can be injured, still I am full of pity for my dear Käthie, who would be half-dead with anxiety before I returned. So do not grieve that I cannot be with you on the occasion of your wedding. May God's grace and blessing rest on you. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

CXXVIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN

Luther, at the Elector's request, gives his opinion as to how the Church livings should be visited and maintained.

November 30, 1525.

God's grace and peace in Christ! Most Serene High-born Prince. Your Electoral Grace has replied to my letter as to a general visitation of the Church livings. Now,

I never meant that all the funds for their support should come out of your Grace's treasury ; but being asked for my opinion, I humbly venture to suggest that you should order all the churches in your dominions to be visited ; and where the people desire Evangelical preachers, and the funds are unable to maintain them, let them receive so much yearly, either from the town council or elsewhere.

For when the people desire pastors, it is your Grace's duty to see they reward them ; for "the workman is worthy of his hire," as the Gospels say. This visitation might be arranged by your Grace dividing your domains into five parts, and sending two visitors either from the nobility or the officials to each part, to examine those livings, and find out what is necessary for the pastors ; and then arrange that so much of the yearly taxation be set aside to augment their incomes. But if this were too much trouble and expense to your Grace, then you could summon the citizens of certain towns and discuss the matter. Only do what seems best in your eyes.

Also, one must consider the old pastors, and where these are pious men, and not disinclined to the gospel, they may be allowed to read the Gospels, along with the postils, themselves to the people (when they are not qualified to preach), thus ministering instruction to their flocks, so that they may be obliged to maintain them ; for it would be wrong to eject those who have been long in office, who are friendly to the gospel, without compensation. I have taken the liberty of pointing out those things at you Electoral Grace's request. I commit you to God. Amen. Your Electoral Grace's humble servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

1526

At the Diet of Speyer the Evangelical Princes ranged themselves for the first time as adherents of the new doctrines, and it was agreed that "in religious matters each State shall live, govern, and behave itself as it shall answer to God and His Imperial Majesty." Spalatin and Agricola preached regularly before the Elector in his own house at Speyer.

CXXIX

TO LEONHARDT BEIER

Concerning Gertrude von Mylen.

January 9, 1526.

Grace and peace in Christ ! I am delighted and approve highly of your intention to marry Gertrude von Mylen, if God gives her to you. You have my best wishes for your success. I prefer her in many ways to her companions. Therefore I comply with your request to write her mother. May the Lord give His blessing. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CXXX

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN OF SAXONY

About Melanchthon's salary.

February 9, 1526.

Grace and peace in Christ ! Serene High-born Prince, Most Gracious Lord. In the reorganisation of the University your Grace ordered that Melanchthon should have 200 gulden a year as salary. Now the man (*Mensch*) objects to accept so much when he cannot undertake with a clear conscience to expound the Scriptures daily. It is useless my speaking to him, for he declares your Grace expects him to lecture regularly. Therefore I humbly beg you to let him know that you will be satisfied if he help with the theological lectures and disputations as before, even should it be only once a week. For even should your Grace present him with this salary for a year or two, he is well worthy of it. For he expounded the Scriptures with great success for about two years without any salary, and perhaps to his injury.

I am most anxious to have the Bible spread abroad here, for it is being eagerly inquired after from all directions. I herewith commend you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXXXI

TO JOHANN AGRICOLA

Teacher in Eisleben, died as Court preacher in Berlin 1556. Œcolampadius and Zwingli refuted. Queen of Denmark's death.

February 18, 1526.

Grace and peace! Although I have really nothing to write about, still I wish to greet you and your wife, dear Agricola; for you must now know what you asked about in your letter, viz. fresh heresies. May God convert them!

For the most learned men in Swabia have written against Œcolampadius and Zwingli, and the book has been printed here. I fear they will not be pleased now with what they were so proud of before. The one heresy has given rise to five different sects, all of whom believe the same thing; but for different reasons, they will soon disappear.

Queen Elizabeth—the consort of the King of Denmark—has passed away, as King Christian himself has written. But she departed joyful in the faith, after receiving the Holy Communion in a truly Christian fashion, in spite of the efforts to make her return to the Papal faith. But Christ evidently wished to have a queen in heaven for once.

Pray remember the royal children's tutor (Hofmeister) in your prayers, and greet your Elsie and all belonging to you. My Käthie also respectfully greets you all, and always holds you in esteem. Wishing you the best of health.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch.)

CXXXII

TO FREDERICK MYCONIUS OF GOTHA

In June of this year an Evangelical alliance was signed in Torgau, the Elector John and his heir being present.

March or April 1526.

Grace and peace! As Oswald your vice-burgher-master is always travelling back and forward to you, dear Frederick, I wished to send you my love. For I am full of joy when I hear of your well-being, and that the Word of God is taking effect among you. Thank God we are well, but I commend myself to your prayers that Christ may not suffer us to be overcome of temptation.

You will perceive how Satan is at present raging among the Catholic priests, and we hear the godless bishops are conspiring together, and Philip writes that in Jena they are threatening me with war.

Therefore, exhort the people to be steadfast in the faith, and pray earnestly to God to overcome the Wicked One, so that peace may be maintained. From what I hear I see plainly that it is necessary to be constantly in prayer, for Satan is up to some mischief.

Therefore, pray call the people's attention to this very weighty matter to convince them that they are in the greatest danger; being suspended between unsheathed swords and the fury of Satan.

May you be sustained through the grace and power of God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

ALTENBURG.
(Walch, v. 21.)

CXXXIII

TO JOHANN AGRICOLA

May 11, 1526.

To my brother in the Lord, John Grickel, in Eisleben.

Grace and peace! I send you this crystal goblet mounted with tin before it gets another owner, for my Käthie has a great fancy for it. I am pleased with your estimate of Erasmus, and still more with that of the head of your educational establishment. Thus, even in those trying times one hears something cheering.

Your Wenall, the schoolmaster, will soon start from Halle to you. I have written him enclosing your letter. Invite him to your house, for you know he merits this.

Tell your Elizabeth, if she does not already know it, that Dr. Drache is now married, and that Syrus has come here with similar intentions. May you keep well, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CXXXIV

TO HERZOG JOHN FREDERICK OF SAXONY

Petition for retired pastor.

May 14, 1526.

Grace and peace! Serene High-born Prince, Most Gracious Lord. The bearer of this letter, Herr Bigand, gave up the living of Waltershausen to the Council, as the result of an arrangement with your Grace that he should receive thirty florins yearly from the church funds. Now, it seems he does not get this money; probably because the Council cannot get it out of the living. But your Grace will learn the true reason. Meantime, the poor old man must run to and fro for his maintenance. So, as he is my schoolmaster, it is my duty to render him all honour, therefore I humbly plead that you will not permit him to lie out of the money, but will graciously help him to get it, to prevent him going abegging in his old age. I herewith commit you to God. Amen. Your Grace's obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXXXV

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

About a teacher. Luther busy with Habbakuk.

June 2, 1526.

Grace and peace in the Lord! The maiden, Hanna, who was here has returned to her people, so the school is vacant. Perhaps she did not feel equal to the duties, so left. But at present we know of no one so well educated and fit for the post.

Philip would have brought the Prophet Habbakuk with him, but it will not be ready for eight days. There is nothing new at present except that our town is being

fortified, although we know of no enemy. My wife, Jonas, and the rector (Cruciger) greet you, as well as the others. My Kätchie is devoted to your memory on account of the handsome glass you sent her. Farewell, dearest Nicolas.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21.)

CXXXVI

TO JOHANN RÜHEL

Luther announces the birth of his son.

June 8, 1526.

Grace and peace! I herewith send you the Psalter, dear Herr Doctor and Brother-in-law, and shall proceed with the Psalms with all my might.

Will you say to M. Eisleben (Agricola) from me that my dear Kätchie presented me with a Hans Luther yesterday at two o'clock, and then he will not marvel that I send this message, for at this time of day he will know what it is to have sons. Greet your dear wife from me, and Eisleben's Elsie. I herewith commit you to God. Amen. I must stop, for the sick Kätchie is calling for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXXXVII

TO JOHANN AGRICOLA

The Diet of Speyer closed 27th August, where the foundations of the German Evangelical Church were laid.

September 20, 1526.

Grace and peace! I write you, my excellent Johannes, merely to say I have nothing special to write about, as Philip, a living epistle, is with you. I was glad he went to let the people see of how much importance such things are, and that we are looking after these in earnest. God grant that your olive branches may thrive. Greet Elsie and your superiors, as well as inferiors, also your Anna and Philip.

Do let us have some more of those berries, for my Kätchie likes them greatly, also Frau Eber. Give my respects to Count Albrecht if you have the opportunity.

Greet Dr. Johann Rühel and his wife, Conrad the scribe, and Johann Dürer.

I now thank the last for the fur coat! I have just received it. It is far too expensive. I shall write him. Farewell to all in the Lord. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

CXXXVIII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

About his literary work.

October 14, 1526.

Grace and peace! I have nothing new, dear Nicolas, to send you, for the little book about war is not through the press yet. I intend beginning Zechariah after Habakuk and Jonah are finished.

Ecclesiastes gives us an immense deal of trouble, just as if he did not wish to be read, and yet was compelled to submit. It has been much too long in obscurity. You are right in saying the world is going to ruin.

But I hope the day of the coming of the Great God is approaching, for we hear only of fires, murders, and fury over all. May all go well with you, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21.)

CXXXIX

TO MARIA, QUEEN OF HUNGARY

Sister of Charles V. Her husband fell fighting against the Turks in August. Luther dedicated Psalms 37, 62, 94, and 109 to her.

November 1, 1526.

To Her Serene Highness Frau Maria, born Queen of Spain, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia. My most gracious lady! Grace and comfort from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! Most gracious queen. I determined, at the instigation of some pious people, to dedicate those four Psalms to your Majesty as an exhortation, joyfully, to maintain and further God's Holy Word

in Hungary; for I received the good news that your Royal Highness was inclined towards the gospel, but that godless bishops, who have all the power in Hungary, tried to hinder it spreading and turn you away from it. Also, that they have shed innocent blood,¹ and set themselves in array against the truth of God.

But seeing, alas, that the matter has taken another turn through the providence of God, and the Turk has caused so much misery by slaying that noble young monarch King Ludwig, your Majesty's beloved husband, I now regard things otherwise. Had the bishops allowed the gospel to spread, all the world would have declared that these evils came upon Hungary because of the Lutheran heresy, and what a scandal that would have been! We shall see whom they will now blame, for God has mercifully prevented such an accusation being made. St. Paul writes that the Holy Scriptures were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Spirit, might have hope, so I have published these Psalms to comfort your Royal Highness (with such comfort as God pleases to give) in this great and sudden affliction with which the Almighty God has seen fit to visit you, not in anger, as we have every right to hope, but as a chastisement so that your Royal Highness may learn to trust only in the true Father which is in heaven, and to be comforted by the one Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, who is also our Brother, nay, our very flesh and blood, and to find your delights with your true companions the dear angels who ever surround and care for us.

For although it was a bitter trial for your Royal Highness to be left so early a widow, and robbed of your dear husband, still there is much consolation to be found in the Scriptures, particularly in the Psalms; and the Father and the Son will show you abundantly where everlasting life lies hidden.

And truly, to whomsoever it is given to see and feel the Father's love towards us in the Scriptures can easily endure all the misery which may be in the world, while whoever does not really feel this can never be truly joyful,

¹ A bookseller in Pesth was burned with his books in 1524.

although he may be revelling in all its pleasures and delights.

No such affliction can overtake any one so great as what God endured in seeing His beloved Son rewarded for all the miracles and good deeds He did to sinful man by being maligned, scorned, and at last subjected to the most shameful death on the cross.

Each thinks his own cross the heaviest, and takes it more to heart than the cross of Christ, even although He had endured ten crosses. This may be because we are not so patient as God is, therefore a much smaller cross is infinitely more painful to us than Christ's cross.

But the Father of all mercies and the God of all consolation will comfort your Royal Highness in His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost, so that you may soon forget your present misery or be able to bear it bravely. Amen. At Wittenberg at the first winter moon. Your Majesty's obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CXL

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN OF SAXONY

The church visitation.

November 22, 1526.

Grace and peace! Most Serene High-born Prince. For long I have asked nothing of your Grace, so the requests have accumulated, therefore your Grace must have patience with those I proffer. The complaints of the clergy everywhere have reached a climax. The farmer will give nothing, and there is so much ingratitude among the people for the Word of God that there is no doubt He will send a plague¹ among us. And if I could reconcile it with my conscience, I would prevent them getting a pastor at all, and let them live like swine, as they are doing.

There is neither fear of God nor discipline because of the Papal ban, and every one does as he likes.

But as we are commanded, especially those in authority,

¹ The plague came the next year.

to look after the poor children, and train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it is necessary to have teachers and preachers.

If old people do not wish these they can always go to the devil. But when the youth are neglected it is the fault of the authorities, and the land will be filled with lawless people, who not only disobey God's commands, but bring us all into dire distress.

But now that the Papal rule is at an end in your Serene Highness's land, and all the cloisters have reverted to you as the head, then these bring obligations with them—the setting of them in order—duties which devolve on you, and which no one else should take up.

Having discussed all this with your Grace's Chancellor and Herr Nicolas, we think it will be necessary that you, being appointed of God for such a purpose, arrange for four persons to visit all the country—two who understand business matters, land and interest (*Zinzen*), and two who understand teaching and preaching—so that they, by your Serene Highness's command, may establish and see to the maintenance of schools and Church livings. Where any town or village is able, then your Grace can compel them to maintain churches, manses, and schools.

If they are not willing to do so for the sake of their future well-being, then your Electoral Highness, as guardian of the youth and all who require it, is quite justified in compelling them to do it, even as the law obliges people to make bridges, roads, etc., for the public benefit.

Now, the most necessary of all is to educate those who come after us and are to bear rule.

Should this press too heavily on the people, then there are the cloister possessions, which were founded mainly for this purpose, and still can be appropriated for the common weal. For, your Electoral Highness can well imagine the outcry which would through time arise were the schools and benefices to be permitted to run waste while the nobility were appropriating the riches of the cloisters, which, it is said, some are already doing.

So, as your Electoral Grace is deriving no advantage from such goods, and as they were instituted to maintain the public service of God, they should, first of all, be applied to this purpose.

Then with what remains your Grace could supply the needs of the land and the poor.

And another point. Dr. Carlstadt has begged me to write to your Highness to ask if he might be allowed to live in Kemberg; for, he cannot exist any longer in the villages, on account of the wickedness of the peasants, as you can read in his pamphlets, and also learn from Hans von Grafendorf, and yet he shrinks from writing to you himself.

Although almost one of ourselves, he has not complained openly as yet. I beg, if it seem good to your Electoral Highness, to ask the provost of Kemberg to look after him. Although I know your Grace has already done enough to create much talk on the subject, yet I would earnestly entreat you to permit this also. God will requite it all the more richly. He will see to his soul and body, and we should do good to His people. The grace of God be with us. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CXLI

TO CONRAD CORDATUS, PASTOR IN AUSTRIA

Cordatus now entered into the circle of Luther's most intimate friends.

November 28, 1526.

Grace and peace! You write me truly wondrous things of your Liegnitz friends—of the power of the spirit and of the flesh in that place, where the one part of the people seem to love intellectual pursuits, while the others live after the flesh.

The greatest evil here is lukewarmness, indifference, against which we must constantly strive. Who knows if God has not turned it upside down with you, so that when the gospel has been warmly received at first it cools down through time, while here, on the contrary, and at variance with all precedent, it is embraced coldly to begin

with, and then slowly gathers strength, till at last it bursts forth in flame.

God grant this people may resemble that son who at the beginning refused to go into the vineyard, and afterwards repented and went. He will be preferred to him who at first promised to go and afterwards did not.

So go on your way unweariedly, and the Lord will be with you, and do not be afraid of those highly enlightened spirits (in their own eyes). Nothing is more foolish in God's sight than such self-deception. May the Lord Christ ever be with you. Write as often as you can. Your letters will always be welcome, partly because they testify to the uprightness of your heart, which is so much needed by your people as well as ours, and partly because they contain so much information calculated to satisfy our curiosity. I herewith commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

1527

This was the year of the first church visitation in Electoral Saxony. Plague in Wittenberg. Sack of Rome.

CXLII

TO JOHANN AGRICOLA

January 1, 1527.

Grace and peace! Käthie, my wife and commander, ordered me to thank you for the cloth you sent, but such a costly gift is not seemly for poor people like us. It is just as it should be, that Elizabeth should enter your Elizabeth's service. God grant that she may be truly obedient. We are all well, and amusing ourselves by beautifying Wittenberg, so that it may have a uniform appearance, while we are becoming lamentably indifferent to the Word of God. I am at present preparing to attack the fanatics abroad.

Pray to God for me that He may crush Satan. Otherwise there is nothing new here. May you and yours prosper. All here greet you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CXLIII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

The Elector accedes to church visitation.

January 10, 1527.

Grace and peace in Christ, dear Nicolas! I have no news, except that the Elector wishes the church visitation begun at once. And after the churches are put on a good footing we can settle the question of excommunication (*Bann*). It would be impossible to do that now, when all is in confusion. Zechariah is in the press, and the book is daily growing under my hand.

I am also attacking the Sacramentarians.

Pray Christ to guide my pen so as to refute Satan successfully. I am greatly rejoiced over your testimony that you are untainted by such rubbish. But I never doubted you. I am grieved that that estimable man Œcolampadius has fallen into the mire through such childish nonsensical ideas. Satan urges him on. May God save him! Urbanus Rhegius also inclines the same way, or has fallen in. May God preserve His own!

You will have heard that the Emperor has been successful in Italy. The Pope is beset on all hands, so that he may be demolished, for his hour has come, although persecution is rife, and many are being burned. My Käthie greets you respectfully.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, vol. 21. 1527.)

CXLIV

TO EBERHARDT BRISGER

February 1, 1527.

Grace and peace! You ask me, my worthy Eberhard, to send you eight gulden; but where am I to get them? You know the state of my finances, and this year alone I have contracted 100 gulden of debt through my wretched management. I have pledged in one quarter three goblets for 50 gulden. The Lord who thus punishes my folly will again draw me out of the net. In addition, Lukas (Cranach) and Christian will take no more such pledges

from me, for they know they will either receive nothing or I be ruined. At length I pressed a fourth goblet upon them for 12 gulden, which they lent me, upon my word of mouth, to give to the fat Hermann. How could I let myself be so drained, and plunge my small belongings in such debt?

Now, it would not be giving my own, but other people's money as alms. So no one can say I am mean or greedy seeing I have been so lavish to others.

Now I shall arrange thus. I shall talk it over with them, and perhaps satisfy them, and if I can lay hands on more money I would not hesitate to advance it. And, lastly, I would like to visit you myself, and talk over matters with you, and see your glebe. Why not let your empty house? It would have brought in a bit of money. Farewell. Yours, MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CXLV

TO ELSIE VON KANITZ

The visitation of the churches and schools began in February. Melanchthon, Schurf, and two nobles were sent to the Wittenberg district.

May 2, 1527.

To the honourable and virtuous maiden, Elsie von Kanitz. My dearest friend in Christ!

Grace and peace in Christ! I have written your dear aunt, Hanna von Plausig, to let you come to me for a time, as I could employ you in teaching young girls, and thus set an example which others might follow. You would live in my house and eat at my table, so you would be safe and free from all care; therefore pray come.

I hear the Evil One is tormenting you with evil thoughts. Oh, dear young lady, do not let that trouble you, for those who suffer from the devil here will not be troubled with him above; so this is a good sign. Christ also had to endure the same, and many holy prophets and apostles, as the Psalms plainly show. Therefore take comfort, and gladly suffer the Father's rod. He will

deliver you in His own time. When you come I shall discuss the subject fully with you.

I commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CXLVI

TO LEONHARDT KAISER

Who was imprisoned and finally burned for his religion.

May 20, 1527.

To the esteemed dear brother in Christ, the faithful servant and prisoner of Christ, Leonhardt Kaiser.

Grace and peace! That your old man should be a prisoner, dear Herr Leonhardt, is the will of Christ your Saviour, who gave Himself up for you and your sins into the hands of the godless, so that He might redeem you with His blood, and make you His brother and co-heir of eternal life.

We are in deep sorrow on your account, and pray earnestly that you may be set free, not so much for your sake as for the benefit of many and the honour of God, if it be His will.

But if it be the will of Heaven that you should not be free, still you are free in spirit. Only see that you are strong, and constantly overcome the weakness of the flesh, patiently bearing with it in the strength of Christ, who is with you in your cell, and will stand by you in all your affliction, as He has promised: "I will be with him in trouble."

Hence you must confidently call upon Him in prayer, sustaining yourself with Psalms of consolation amid Satan's fury, so that you may be strengthened of the Lord, and not succumb too readily to the teeth of Behemoth (Job xl. 15). For you know he cannot injure you if you cry to Christ, whose presence and power are over all.

As St. Paul says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and He will help all who are tempted. Therefore, my beloved brother, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, so that you may recognise,

endure, love, and praise out of a full heart the fatherly will of God, whether free or not.

To enable you to do this, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will work in you, according to the riches of His glory, who is the Father of all mercies and the God of all consolation. Amen. I herewith commit you to God ; also pray for us. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

CXLVII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

In July, Melanchthon, Myconius, and Menius of Erfurt, with three lawyers, began church visitation in Thuringia.

July 13, 1527.

To the esteemed Nicolas Hausmann of Zwickau.

Grace and peace ! The church visitation has begun in earnest. Eight days ago Herr Hieronymus and Magister Philip set off. May the Lord guide them. Amen.

Rome has been devastated in the most merciless manner. Christ has so overruled it that the Emperor, who, because of the Pope, persecuted Luther, should now be obliged to overthrow the Pope on Luther's account.

So all things have been made subservient to the welfare of God's people against the adversary. I have no other news.

My Käthie and my Hans greet you. Farewell in the Lord. I have had a terrible attack of giddiness, so that I can neither read nor write. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütz.)

CXLVIII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

In this visitation the Elector legally established the office of superintendent, to keep an eye on the efficiency of the clergy.

August 15, 1527.

I am glad to hear you are again well, and thank God

for this. Pray that I may be kept in health, if it be the will of God our Saviour.

The Prince sent me the report of the visitation to see if it was worth printing. It is all right, if they only stick to what is arranged. The plague is certainly here, but it is not bad. However, the people are so terrified that they are running away in every direction.

I have never seen Satan so successful. The more he can frighten them the happier he is; and that he has scattered our University is a great joy to him. But only eighteen have died. In the fishers' quarter no one has died of it, but all are buried there. To-day we have buried ——'s wife, who died yesterday, almost in my arms. This is the first death in the middle of the town. The other eighteen are round about the Elster Gate. Among them was Barbara, your Eberhardt's daughter, who was marriageable, and John Kronenberg's daughter. Hans Luft has recovered, and many others get better if they take medicine. But many are so excited they will do nothing, and die defiantly. Justus Jonas has lost his son Johannes. He, with his household, has gone to his fatherland, but I remain here, as the people are in desperation. So Pommer and I are here alone with the chaplain, but Christ is with us, who will overcome the old murderous serpent, who brought sin into the world, even although he may bruise our heel. Pray for us, and may God protect you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch.)

CXLIX

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

August 19, 1527.

The visitation will not be allowed to drop, dear Nicolas, so let us be of good cheer. We hope the plague may soon be over. It plagues us in manifold ways, especially me, weakening my faith and loading me with care. The pest has been three times in the house. The little son has been eight days ill, and is only kept alive by liquids; but now he is recovering. For many months I have suffered from faithlessness. Pray that our faith

may not fail. My Käthie sends money for linen. I do not wish to trouble you. Pommer, who comforts me in my solitude, as the plague took the chaplain's wife away, greets you warmly. Käthie also commends herself to your prayers. Farewell, beloved brother.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 605.)

CL

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther rejoices over his friend's recovery.

September 2, 1527.

Accept my greeting, for I have really nothing to write. But I would thank my Lord Jesus, my excellent Hausmann, that He has restored you to us. Praised be His name to all eternity for doing this! Amen.

I hope that the visitors will, after a short rest, go on with their work. Meantime comfort yourself in patience. At the same time pray for us, so that the Lord may remove the epidemic and gather again the scattered ones, that His Word may be spread abroad more and more. God grant this. I commit you to Him.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CLI

TO GERHARDT XANTIS

Luther expresses joy over his friends' intercession for him, on account of the absence of his helpers in Jena.

September 2, 1527.

To my honoured brother in Christ, Gerhardt Xantis.

Grace and peace! The other day I wrote to Montanus, and not to you. Now I write to you, and not to Montanus, for I perceive you are one heart and soul in the Lord. Therefore show him this letter, and thank him on my behalf for being so constantly remembered in prayer.

All of us, and especially myself, stand much in need

of such intercession, and I rejoice that such pious men feel so deeply interested in me.

The Commentary upon Zechariah, which was half finished, has been delayed because of my health. The Prophets, which we had begun to translate into German, have again been obliged to hang their harps, through the dispersion of our colleagues by the plague.

Let our Jacob know this, that he may pray more earnestly for us, that Christ, our Physician, may allay the fear, not so much of the frequent deaths, as of a most infectious disease, so that our people may again return and our work be resumed. It is Satan himself who has spread these evil reports and fears to impede the gospel, but Christ will, in answer to your prayers, tread him under our feet. God grant this.

Our wives are full of joy, and thank you for your present, and good heart. Melanchthon unites in thanking you with me.

The High School¹ has been removed to Jena. Pommer and his wife greet you warmly, and also mine. And I greet you warmly, and promise, with God's help, to do what you prescribe. And yet one more greeting from my son.

I herewith commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CLII

TO THE CHRISTIANS IN HALLE

Halle long shut to the Reformation, because of Herzog George, although in 1527 their Evangelical preacher, George Winkler, was murdered by order of the Archbishop of Mayence.

September 1527.

To the dear friends of Christ in Halle. Grace and peace in Christ our Saviour! Amen.

Dear sirs and friends—I have long intended writing you a letter of admonition and consolation under the trials with which Satan has visited you, through the murder of that

¹ University.

good man, Magister George, thus robbing you of a faithful pastor, who declared to you the Word of life. But one thing after another has prevented me, especially my weak health, and although not yet well I can delay no longer.

But although unable to derive any comfort from such an untoward event, still it would be wrong to allow such a perfidious murder to be passed over in silence, and let such blood rot in the earth instead of bearing witness to God's Holy Word.

Therefore I shall help it to cry to Heaven, in order that so much as in us lies, such a murder may never be forgotten till God the merciful Father and righteous Judge hears the cry, as He heard that of righteous Abel's blood, and executes justice upon the murderer.

And God grant that Magister George's blood may be a divine seed, which although sown in the earth by the hands of Satan and his members, may bring forth seed an hundredfold, so that instead of the murdered George a hundred other faithful preachers may arise, who will injure Satan a thousand times more than the one man has done; and because he would neither suffer nor listen to the one he will be obliged to suffer and listen to many others, even as happened to the Pope through Huss's blood, whom he would not permit to exist quietly in a corner, but must now hear its cries over the whole world, till it has reached Rome itself, and there seems no prospect of its being silenced. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CLIII

TO MICHAEL STIEFEL

About Leonhardt Kaiser's death.

October 22, 1527.

Grace and peace! I have received the history of Leonhardt Kaiser, but meantime his cousin has sent me all his writings in his own hand. I shall have them printed at once.

Pray earnestly that Christ may not forsake me, for I am driven almost mad by the assaults of Satan's angels.

Miserable creature that I am! How unlike Leonhardt! I preach the gospel with many words, but he is a powerful doer of the Word. Oh that I were counted worthy to be endued, not with the double but with the half of his spirit, so that I might be able to overcome Satan and quit this life. God be praised that amid so much evil He has granted us poor miserable creatures a glorious glimpse of His loving-kindness as a token that He has not forsaken us.

Pray for me, my brother Michael, and may Christ grant that we too may be followers of Leonhardt. He is not called a king, but a kaiser, for he has overcome him whose power is so great that no one on earth can be compared to him.

In addition, he is not only a priest, but a true bishop, nay pope, who has offered up his body as a sacrifice well pleasing to the Holy God. Also, he is rightly named Leonhardt, that is, lion-heart, for he has proved himself to be a strong and fearless lion. All that this name signified was foreseen when he received it. He is the first of his race who has so consecrated the name.

Give your dear wife my thanks, and my little prattling Hans must send his respects to you. I and my Käthie hope that she may live happily with her child in Christ.

Pommer greets you warmly. Farewell in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 597.)

CLIV

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

A letter full of complaints.

November 1, 1527.

Grace and peace! Dear Amsdorf—It seems to be God's will that I who up till now was wont to comfort you all, now need it greatly myself. Meantime my sole petition is that you will help me to pray that Christ may perfect His gracious will in me; so that I may be well pleasing in His sight, and never be ungrateful to Him,

after having up till now zealously preached His gospel and honoured His name, although often having grieved Him with my sins. Satan begs that a Job may be delivered into his hands, but Christ bids him spare his life. And to me He says, "I am thy salvation," which makes me sure that He will not for ever be wroth over my sins. I should like to answer the Sacramentarians, but if I do not get stronger I cannot.

My house has been turned into a hospital. Augustine's Hanna had the plague inwardly, but is now better. Margaret Mochim alarmed us with a sore and other bad symptoms. I am also very anxious about my Kätthie at present. My Hans has been three days ill, and eats nothing. Some say it is the teeth, and both seem in danger.

The wife of George, the chaplain, is also ill of the plague, and her condition is perilous. May Jesus be gracious to her. So there are fightings without and fears within.

Truly, the Lord is trying us sorely. Our one consolation is, and with this we can defy Satan, that we have God's Word, through which believing souls can be saved, although He consumes the bodies. We send greeting to the brethren and yourself, and beg you to pray for us that we may patiently endure God's chastening hand, and withstand Satan's power and cunning, both in life and death. Wittenberg, All Saints' Day. In tenth year of the overthrow of the Indulgence, to whose memory we are drinking a toast, and to both our healths. MARTIN LUTHER.

CLV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

A sad letter. Jonas in Nordhausen during the plague.

November 10, 1527.

Grace and peace in God our Saviour! Thanks, dear Jonas, that you pray for us, and sometimes write.

I hope you got yesterday's letter. I have not read Erasmus's writings nor those of the Sacramentarians, except

something by Zwingli. They only do right in trampling a miserable creature like me under foot, thereby following Judas's example, and making me utter my complaints to my Lord Jesus of being persecuted on all sides, and having to bear God's indignation for having sinned against Him. The Pope, Emperor, Bishops, and the whole world attack me; and as if this were not enough, my very brethren plague me, nay, even my sins, death, and the devil with his angels, rage without measure.

So then what would become of me were Christ to forsake me because of whom all these are my enemies? But He will not desert me, poor miserable sinner, for I esteem myself the least of all men.

Would that Erasmus and the Sacramentarians experienced for one quarter of an hour the sorrows of my heart, then I would declare they were truly converted. But now my enemies are mighty, and heap anguish on him whom the Lord chastens.

But enough of this, so that I may not seem impatient under God's rod, who chastens and heals, kills and makes alive again.

Let His holy and perfect will be praised now and for ever! Were we of the world it would love its own. I am also very anxious about my wife.

The Lord has done great things for me, so I must suffer great things. May Christ be my rock and my strength. Amen.

My Hans can send no greeting in his sickness, but begs for your prayers. For twelve days he has lived only on fluids. He now begins to eat a little. The child would gladly play as he used to do, but is not able.

Margaret Mochim's abscess was opened yesterday, and she is now a little better. I do not wish Rome to be burned; that would be a marvellous sign. Would to God that we could meet again in our homes, and work at Ecclesiastes, so that it may be issued before we die. I commend myself to your prayers. We Wittenberg people are hated of all, and they are terrified on account of the pest. As the Psalm says, "We are a byword among the

heathen, a shaking of the head among the people," but we hope a joy and crown of the angels and saints.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CLVI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther thanks him for comfort received.

November 17, 1527.

Grace and peace in Christ! May our Lord Christ one day, dear Nicolas, comfort you with the comfort you have given me. But I, poor sinner, thank my Lord that up till now He has not permitted Satan to do as he pleased with me, although he has tried with all his might and cunning to do so.

Pray that Christ may overcome him and his onslaught upon me. I do not believe that it is one devil that is attacking me, but that the very prince of devils has risen against me, so great is his power of assailing me with Scripture, so that my own knowledge of the Bible does not suffice for my protection if I were not strengthened by words of Scripture out of the mouths of my friends.

This is why I ask so earnestly for your prayers; and if ever you are in the same position, the sport of the devil, you will understand my request. May Christ be with you. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1069.)

CLVII

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther longs for his friend's return.

November 29, 1527.

Grace and peace! That you are so earnest in your prayers for me, dear Jonas, is a very great boon to me, poor tortured creature. I also pray much for you that Christ may take pity on you, for I hear you suffer from stone.

I would counsel you to return to us, for Christ be praised, the plague has abated, and our townspeople are beginning to marry and live in security. Your quarters

since ——'s death are now quite purified up to the Pfarr church and the market. May the Lord guide you to what is well pleasing to Him and good for yourself. Amen.

Greet your Kätzie and Justelchen. Augustine's wife is better. If only Margaretha Mochim would recover, but now we have hope. She has been some weeks ill, and can scarcely hear or speak.

P.S.—Your house, which is now clean, I have lent to the other chaplain's wife and family, for she was so distressed over the death of her friend, the chaplain's wife, that it was the only way to comfort her, but the two husbands sleep here in the manse. I hope you will excuse us making so free with your belongings, but I promised that if the plague attack any of them they shall at once be brought back here.

Meanwhile may Christ give you a house in Nordhausen, as we in our dire need had to take yours.

Our Brunoni's little son will not live over the day, for death has marked the orphan for his own. Farewell in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1072.)

CLVIII

TO JOHANN WALTHER, IN TORGAU

Walther was three weeks in Luther's house helping to arrange the Church music, the Reformer himself composing the melodies for the German hymns, to Walther's amazement. Luther said Virgil had taught him this.

December 21, 1527.

Grace and peace! From this letter you will see, my Walther, that I answered your last, as I wished to offer you help and counsel. The messenger should have fetched this letter early in the morning, as you write, but how can I know where they spend the night, or run after them? It is their custom, when they have given the letters to my servants, to disappear, as if carried away by the wind, and they do not reappear. Therefore I write once more, as you request. I herewith commit you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CLIX

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther expects the return of the University from Jena.

December 29, 1527.

Grace and peace! I marvel much, my Jonas, that you have not yet returned, seeing the plague is gone.

You might at least have paid us one visit in our affliction—of course, at our expense.

The people who had fled are now returning in shoals—indeed, the whole of the citizens.

To-morrow the Town Council will also be here, and we expect the University shortly, as Magister Philip writes. God has manifested His love towards us in a marvellous manner, letting us perceive that our earnest prayers are acceptable in His sight, although we ourselves are sinners.

Margaretta Mochim is restored from the jaws of death, for we had given up hope, as she could neither hear nor understand. Otherwise we are all well.

My Käthie, with the little baby Elizabeth, is well, and sends you greetings, but is longing to see you all here again in good health.

I am well in body, also in mind, so long as my Lord Christ upholds me, and the slender thread by which He keeps hold of me, and I of Him, is not snapped asunder.

But Satan has tried to drag me down with powerful cart ropes and ships' cords into the abyss, but the weak Christ has overcome as yet, through your prayers, and struggles bravely for the victory!

Go on and cause the weak Christ within me to become strong through your prayers, that He in His weakness may defy the might and insolence of the devil. Revenge me on him, and turn his pride into shame, which I have exposed through the discovery of his arts and cunning.

We are all one in Christ. May you prosper much in Him! Greet all your people, and return speedily.

MARTIN LUTHER.

1528

CLX

TO GERHARDT XANTIS

The second visitation of the churches began in October—Spalatin, Melanchthon, Luther, Jonas, Myconius, taking part. The following year the Elector ordered Luther to remain at home, as Wittenberg lost one hundred students through his and Melanchthon's absence.

January 1, 1528.

Grace and peace! I received your last letter of consolation with much joy, my Gerhardt. Many thanks. May Christ comfort you for this. No doubt this temptation, which has afflicted me from my youth up, is very great, but I could not have believed that it should so have gained the upper hand. Nevertheless, up till now Christ has always conquered. I commend myself to your prayers and those of the brethren. I have helped others, but cannot help myself.

Praise to my Christ, who, amid poverty, murmuring against God, and even in death, will gather us together into His kingdom.

Meantime we know, that firmly as we may trust His Word and work, these will not justify us. We are ever faithless, although we may boast of having led a Christian life in this world, in spite of its accompanying trials. But one thing is certain, Christ is our life and righteousness, and it is hidden in God. (How difficult, how alien to the flesh, is it to comprehend this.) I am glad I now understand St. Peter's allusions to being partakers of Christ's sufferings, which are the portion of our brethren in this world; but as life draws to a close they become more bitter. Greet Montanus and all the brothers.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CLXI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

The little book on the Visitation.

March 2, 1528.

Grace and peace ! The book on the Visitation is not finished, for the printers ran short of paper, but it will soon be ready. I am delighted to hear your good opinion of Herr Paul, Abbot of Sagan, and that he sent you such an honest answer. May we with one heart and mouth praise the Father to all eternity. Amen !

There is nothing new here, except the terrible threats of the priests, who hope much from the Regensburg Diet. Pray earnestly with your people for the Princes of Germany, that God may endue them with grace, so that they need not always require to come together at such great expense, and in vain, but may desire peace and righteousness, as is seemly.

We have had so many diets lately, and see no results, because God has forsaken us ; while the devil hinders all that is good. Farewell, and greet Paul your evangelist in the Lord, with all the brethren. MARTIN LUTHER.

CLXII

TO CONRAD CORDATUS

Luther invites his friend to Wittenberg, as he thinks he cannot be happy in King Ferdinand's land.

March 6, 1528.

Grace and peace in the Lord ! Dearest Cordatus—I have known for long that you had left Austria, and were living on the estate of Glück in Silesia, waiting to be recalled by that noble lady in the Riesengebirge, who promised to send for you, but I fancy will not do so.

If you are not comfortable there, do not hesitate to hasten to me, or wherever you would like to go. If it should ever occur to the lady to recall you, she can find you as easily with us as anywhere else, and I thought you could have more congenial society here than among people

so unlike yourself. For my part, I have no hesitation in begging you to set aside the lady's promises and begin work in the Lord's vineyard. So come with your wife and sister till Christ arranges something else.

The Papists, triumphant through Ferdinand's mandate, are waxing bold, and probably will not grant the gospel's servants any authority in these lands; and why should you buoy yourself with vain hopes? It is now three months since the plague left Wittenberg, God be praised! I hope you have read my treatise against the Anabaptists. I flatter myself that I have rescued some from their errors. The rest you will hear from our Rorar, Christ's faithful servant. The grace of God be with you!

MARTIN LUTHER.

CLXIII

TO LEONHARDT BEIER

Luther invites him to Wittenberg.

March 7, 1528.

Grace and peace! When Satan rages, my Leonhardt, he is only acting in accordance with his office and name. For, as the Scriptures say, nothing else is to be expected from him. But be steadfast, and struggle and pray against him in spirit and in deed.

There is One who is mighty, and He dwells within us. To God be honour and glory. If you be driven away, a refuge is waiting for you here, and all that the Lord has given us is at your service. For many (*Exultanten*) who have to flee from Ferdinand's kingdom settle among us, who at least resemble Christ in His poverty. I commend myself to your prayers and those of your friends. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CLXIV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther announces his arrival in Borna.

March 18, 1528.

Grace and peace! I have this moment arrived in Borna, dear Spalatin, almost frozen, and starving of

hunger. What a dreadful journey we have had, but we have done it in two days, having crawled rather than travelled, for we were determined to sup with you to-night. I write this in order that you may excuse us to the Prince. For, the letter demanding our presence only arrived the other night, and we hurried as much as we could, but the roads, wind, and cold hindered us.

So, if God will, we shall breakfast with you to-morrow.

Pommer and Jonas are my travelling companions, as they did not wish me to go alone. May you prosper in the Lord !

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1094.)

CLXV

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther sends books, and tells of the Electress of Brandenburg's flight.

March 28, 1528.

Grace and peace ! I have given Johann Hoffmann copies to distribute among you, against the Sacramentarians. God grant that they bring forth much fruit, for I have resolved to stop writing against them, for they do not understand logic, so it is impossible to bring them to reason or convince them that they have been refuted.

The Electress has, with the help of her brother the King of Denmark, fled from Berlin Schloss to our Prince here, her uncle ; for it is said the Elector intended walling her up on account of her having partaken of the sacrament in both kinds. Pray for our Prince. The pious and good-hearted man is much plagued, and deserves the help of our prayers. May you prosper with wife and child !

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1098.)

CLXVI

TO A STRANGER

Consolation to one doubting his election to eternal life.

July 20, 1528.

Dear sir and friend—I wish you above all the grace

and mercy of God through his Son Jesus, our sole Saviour. Some days ago, my brother, Caspar Cruciger, doctor of the Holy Scriptures, informed me that you were afflicted with strange thoughts as to God's omniscience, and had become quite perplexed, so that it was feared you might take your own life (which may God Almighty prevent).

You find difficulty in believing that the Almighty knew from all eternity who should be saved, whether they were already dead, alive, or as yet unborn. Now, all must admit this, for He knows all things, and nothing is hidden from Him who counts the stars in the heavens, the leaves of the trees, nay, even the hairs of men's heads, from all which you seem to fancy you may do what you will, good or evil, for if God has ordained whether you shall be saved or not (which is true) your thoughts are more taken up with damnation than salvation, and you sink into despair and become a prey to despondency. So I, as my Lord Christ's servant, send this letter of consolation to let you know God's thoughts towards you, whether you are destined to blessedness or perdition.

Although the Almighty knows everything, and no one can go against the decrees of His will, still it is His earnest desire, nay command, decreed from all eternity, that all men should be partakers of everlasting joy, as is clearly seen from Ezekiel xviii. 23—

“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord; and not that he should return from his ways, and live?”

Seeing He desires the salvation of sinners, who swarm beneath heaven's lofty vault, why will you with your foolish thoughts prompted by Satan separate yourself from them, thereby cutting yourself off from the grace of God? “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him,” and cry for help. For He is rich toward all who call upon Him. But it is only strong faith which can drive away such despairing thoughts as in Rom. iii. 22, “Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.” Mark these words: *unto all*, and *upon all*. If not among that

number, at least you can reckon yourself among the sinners, which is a greater reason that you should pray and be certain of the answer should God delay coming speedily to your help ; for He will never forsake those who call upon Him, nor fail to drive away your despairing doubts which are the fiery darts of the devil and his emissaries. Why wander in false ways when so good and straight a path is before you, and the Father cries, "This is my beloved Son !" Listen to His counsel ! And even although in your despair you were so hardened as not to hear God's voice, you cannot overlook that of the Son, who stands across the path which all must tread, crying in trumpet-like tones, "Come unto me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He not only uses the word "come," but "all." No one is excluded, no matter how wicked he be. So, seeing all may come, do you run with them, leap and spring, and do not remain among those lost crowds.

Further, He says "to me !" who knows every foot of the way, and will not let thy foot slide. Why wander aimlessly about ? But who are to come ? The weary and heavy laden ! And what kind of company would that be ? I do not know Messrs. Weary and Heavy Laden. They ought to have high-sounding names, such as burgher-master, and such like—these master minds, who love to grovel in God's Word with their human reason, like the sow in a turnip field ! Not at all. It is he who is weary and heavy laden, borne down with sad thoughts direct from the Evil One, who is called,—the man who does not know to what hand to turn, and is ready to sink into despair. So that is why He says "heavy laden," as if He had known our burdens, and wished to help us to bear them, nay, even relieve us of them entirely.

And consider that God Almighty created and elected us, not to damnation, but to everlasting life, even as the angels in the first sermon proclaimed to the shepherds on the field : "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men !" And it was inner, not bodily peace they meant. It was not from those who injured them, but from the world, the flesh, and the

devil, they were to be delivered. Hence one can see from the Scriptures how great is God's mercy, and these and such like thoughts can enable him to form an opinion as to God's foreseeing, and then there is no occasion for a man to torture himself, nor would it avail even were he to worry his flesh from his bones.

What business is it of yours that God causes the dear sun to shine over good and bad, over arid and green? God has ordained that the sun should endue the moisture of the ground with its vital powers, thus causing the roots and branches of the trees to fructify and yield fruit. And if a dried-up tree should nevertheless remain impervious to the rays of the sun, still the tree is not so much at fault as the soil which is marshy. For "good ground, good corn," as the proverb says. Thus, where the preaching is good and full of consolation, there are sure to be tender consciences and joyful hearts. Therefore as you cannot hinder the natural sun, which is a tiny spark compared to the starry firmament,—the smallest star being larger than the whole world,—from spreading her rays abroad, still less can you limit God's grace, being fathomless, having neither beginning nor end. Dear one, do not reckon so close with God. Fancy if the Son of God had asked the high priests and Levites at the crucifixion if He should receive the malefactor into Heaven, what would they have said? Doubtless the answer would have been: "If thieves and murderers desire to enter Heaven we do not object," and might have added, "If he belong to Paradise we should not have hung him upon a gallows, and it is as likely he will enter Heaven as that you are God."

Thus speaks a scornful world and man's reason.

How well Christ answered His disciples who asked, as John lay asleep on His bosom, "What shall this man do?" "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" as if to warn him not to fall. "Let every one sweep before his own door, and then we shall be saved!" This would prevent much heart-burning as to what God in the eternal counsel of His will has decreed concerning those who should be saved or lost. He who will not

accept a certainty for an uncertainty will at length come away empty-handed, besides being the object of ridicule. He who will not be counselled in time and despises God's Word will fall a prey to a raging devil as sure as God is God. If things went with us according to our thoughts, prompted by the flesh and the devil, we should all be given over to death, therefore we have the word of promise: "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

If we persevere to the end we may console ourselves that devilish thoughts shall be expelled, and we may raise our hearts in faith to God, and be certain that we have received forgiveness of sins, and shall be, nay, are justified, according to Christ's promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, as St. Paul testifies in Gal. iii. 22.

That is when we are cast down, and every path seems shut up to us, we shall once more stand erect in faith, resting on God's promises of Christ, or in Christ. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CLXVII

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Invitation to Mary Mochim's marriage.

July 31, 1528.

Grace and peace! We have betrothed Mary Mochim to Herr Georgio, and the marriage takes place on St. Lawrence's Day. As we think this is a good opportunity for you to visit us, we plead with you to come, when, if God will, we shall have a joyous wedding feast. As to the rest—pray to Christ for us in whom your soul flourishes. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1116.)

CLXVIII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther thanks him in his boy's name for toys.

August 5, 1528.

Grace and peace! My Hanschen thanks you, dear Nicolas, for the beautiful toys, which he is very proud of.

I purpose writing about the Turkish war. My little daughter Elizabeth has been taken away from me, leaving me almost in womanly sorrow, so deeply am I grieved.

I never dreamt that a father's heart could have been so soft towards his children.

Pray to God for me, and may you prosper in Him!

WITTENBERG.

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—As to the Freybergerin, the escaped nun, being carried away, I have my own thoughts, so let it rest.

(Walch, v. 21. 1528.)

CLXIX

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN

Request to appoint M. Stiefel as pastor in Lochau.

September 3, 1528.

To the Most Serene High-born Prince, Elector John. Grace and peace! Most gracious lord! M. Franciscus, the pastor in Lochau, has fallen asleep in God, and the people have asked —— to be appointed. But I have referred them to your Grace, as I have nothing to do with that.

Now, I am most anxious to retain Michael Stiefel in the land, for he is pious and well acquainted with the Scriptures, and a good preacher. So, if it please your Highness, we all think he should meantime be settled in Lochau, till perhaps another turn up, for the good man is quite unhappy in case he is a burden to me (he is here just now, but I can scarcely prevent him leaving). I am most anxious to have pious learned people about us, for we lose so many such.

Were he to become pastor in Lochau we would try to get him to help the poor widow with her two children, she being left in great poverty, perhaps by marrying her, but if not—God's will be done. I relate all this to your Electoral Highness and beg a favourable answer. But it occurs to me that you know M. Stiefel, who travelled with us to Weimar; you presented him with five gulden. May Christ ever be with you! Amen. Your Grace's obedient

(Walch, v. 21. 260.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

CLXX

TO JOHANN AGRICOLA

Melanchthon in Thuringia on the visitation.

October 25, 1528.

Grace and peace ! Philip is absent on the visitation, so we are deprived of his counsel in seeking a school-master.

But I shall consult Milich and George Major to see if one can be sent at once, although I am told that Veit was with you before, whom meantime you could have again. Within eight days we shall tell you what we have arranged.

I am just starting for Lochau to marry M. Stiefel to the widow of the Bishop of Lochau, and to introduce him to his new charge. One thing always seems to come upon the top of another. I could not keep the man (*Mensch*) with me, for he was far too modest, fancying he was a burden to me, so preferred living anyhow elsewhere, thus compelling me at length to let him go. He herewith sends you by me some letters inviting you to his marriage. I fear they are a little late, but dispose of them as quickly as possible. Farewell to your Hans Albert and the other branches of your vine. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1124.)

CLXXI

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther comforts him over calumnies caused by his marriage.

October 29, 1528.

You must not vex yourself over the outcry your marriage has caused, but rather rejoice ; for it is a condition which has God's approval, and is lauded by the angels, and held in honour of all saints. In addition it has this seal, that it is distinguished by the cross being vilified by devils and false brethren, to which every word and work of God are subjected.

Therefore regard the priestly utterances as so many precious stones which blacken you in the world's eyes, but make you all-glorious in the eyes of a pure God, and comfort yourself that the world is not esteemed worthy to perceive the glory of such a work of God as you are permitted to see. Let the world with its princes indulge in their foolish, presumptuous judgments and blasphemies. The wicked must be rooted out, so as not to see the glory of God. I have no doubt the priests are hurrying you into Bethaven, but be that as it may, you have received the office of the visitation, and have a gracious Lord who will not suffer you to want the necessities of life. May the Lord Jesus strengthen you by His Spirit !
Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

CLXXII

TO CHANCELLOR BRÜCK

Petition for longer leave for Bugenhagen.

November 11, 1528.

Grace and peace! Honoured and learned Herr Doctor! A messenger has just arrived from the Town Council of Hamburg to ask permission from my gracious lord that Herr Johann Pommer may be allowed to remain longer there, as the enclosed documents testify. Although I had written to the good man not to worry as to overstaying his leave, if God's work required it (for our lord has no desire to hinder the Word of God, if Bugenhagen's presence can further it), but the good man had no peace till our gracious lord himself assured him of it. Therefore, pray procure a writing from my lord, asking him to return as soon as he can, without imperilling God's work through his haste, but empowering him to defer his return if necessary. Your Excellency will know how to manage it, and send it by this messenger. I commit you to God. Your Excellency's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CLXXIII

TO MICHAEL STIEFEL

Luther rejoices in his friend's happiness.

November 1528.

Grace and peace! I am delighted, dear Michael, that you are so pleased with your wife and her children, and that she loves you. May God maintain this unity! Will you say to the overseer that it is impossible for me to come to his marriage, as I have not a free hour that day. I expected we would have been in Schweritz then, and could sacrifice half a day in his honour, but the business connected with the church visitation has increased so enormously that all our plans have been upset. So please apologise for me. Greet your Eve with the olive branches committed to your care. The evening I got your letter.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1341.)

CLXXIV

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther sends letters to his friend, who is on the visitation.

November 30, 1528.

Grace and peace! I send you, as well as Lukas Cranach, letters which have lain long here.

The Chancellor will tell you the rest. Say to Lukas that gloves and a black cap were sent with the other things from Augsburg. If any of the letters tell you for whom they are, let them write. For we have received all our things, but did not wish to open any of the letters.

To-day I am again a prey to the tempter. Do pray in such times of sifting for me as I do for you, that my faith may not fail. We have paid all due honour to the Chancellor. Your family and ourselves are all well. My Kätie greets you respectfully, and longs for your return. May Christ be with you! Amen. I trust all our folks who are with you may keep well.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1339.)

CLXXV

TO MARGARETTA N.

Consolation on the death of her husband.

December 5, 1528.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus! Honoured and virtuous lady! Having heard from your son of the great trial with which you have been visited, viz. the death of your husband, I am moved out of Christian love to write this letter of consolation to you.

First, you must take comfort that in the hard conflict which beset your lord (Herr), the Lord Jesus at length gained the victory, and that your husband at last passed away full of trust and confidence in the Lord, which I was delighted to hear.

For even thus did Christ Himself struggle in the garden and rise again from the dead.

It is even possible that your husband inflicted an injury upon himself, for the devil has power over the members of the body, and may have forcibly guided his hand against his will. For if he had done it willingly, it is unlikely he would have come again to himself and turned to Christ with such ample confession of sin. How often does the devil break arm, neck, back, and all the limbs? He can gain the mastery over all the members, therefore be satisfied in God, and rank yourself among those of whom Christ says, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted!"

All the saints must sing Psalm xlv.: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." There must be suffering and misfortune if we are to partake of the consolation.

Therefore thank God for His great mercy in not suffering your husband to linger in conflict and despair, as is the case with so many, but he was by God's grace delivered and at length restored to the Christian faith, and numbered among those of whom it is said: "Blessed are they who die in the Lord." And "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

May God the Father comfort and strengthen you with such words in Christ Jesus! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

(From Luther's *Letters to Women*.)

1529

In this year the Diet at Speyer was held, also the Conference at Marburg, between the German and Swiss divines, on the question of the Lord's Supper. Luther's Larger and Shorter Catechisms appeared simultaneously.

CLXXVI

TO NICOLAS VON AMSDORF

February 12, 1529.

That you are pleased with my little book against Herzog George is a great pleasure to me. For all are down upon me, forgetting how he has treated me, and act towards him as if he were innocent. I shall not show them your letter, or they would class you with me. Henceforth I shall not answer the tyrant, as he asks me to let him alone in future. Much is being said here about Ferdinand's tyranny and extortion. Pray that God may strengthen me that I may not be left in Satan's hand. The Lord Jesus maintain and bless you! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21.)

CLXXVII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

February 15, 1529.

I am delighted that the church visitation has come to such a happy end among you. May other church matters soon be arranged. We sing the Litany both in Latin and German here. Perhaps a printed form may soon be issued. Then the days of humiliation, the ban, and the other liturgical arrangements connected with our congregations will follow. This is enough to begin with.

I have been suffering from giddiness, not to mention what I endure from Satan's emissaries. Pray that God

may strengthen me. I shall never again answer Herzog George.

My sermon against the Turks would have been printed long ago had not the first printed sheets been lost through the servant's carelessness. My Käthie greets you, also Jonas and Philip. We fear Pommer will not return before Ascension. Christ be with you! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CLXXVIII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther complains of temptations.

March 3, 1529.

Grace and peace! The Catechism is not ready, but it will soon be, my Hausmann, also the sermon against the Turks. But in spite of my soul being well, I am always ill, so dreadfully does Satan plague me by preventing me studying, for I must have society to hinder him attacking me in my solitude. Pray for me. Now that your Paul has been dismissed as Spalatin wrote, you must be thinking of a successor. If you have none in view, I think Cordatus would be the most suitable. He is an excellent and learned man, and a staunch confessor of his faith. Farewell, and pray for the impending Diet.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CLXXIX

TO NICOLAS VON AMSDORF

Luther sends a letter inviting him to Holstein.

March 21, 1529.

Grace and peace! From this letter you will see what the Herzog wishes regarding you. But as I do not think it would be Christian-like to tear you away from Magdeburg so soon, it would be better to serve him otherwise.

Show this document to Stein and Klotz in the Council, and let them see you may accept, which may bring them

to reason, and cause them to do something for the schools. Do let them think you are in earnest. And if they plead with you to remain do not be too easily persuaded to do so. For I am still doubtful whether your departure would grieve them. You will know that Langefeld has been called away, and that Marcus Scharfte in Hesse is dead.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1152.)

CLXXX

TO NICOLAS VON AMSDORF

At Diet of Speyer the Elector and Princes protested against the Edict against the Lutherans, hence the word Protestant.

March 29, 1529.

Grace and peace! I am pleased that you proved Stein thus, and have found neither him nor others wanting. Now that I have a pretext I shall write, and earnestly exhort them to promote learning. Go on as you are doing, and help the good work as much as you can. The bridegroom Bruno has asked me to invite you to his wedding on Thursday. The bride (Gersa von Krosse) will come to my house on Tuesday, or rather to my wife's. So arm yourself, not with sword of steel, but with gold and silver,¹ for you shall not escape without a present. No news from Speyer, but you hear everything. Farewell in Christ. Pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CLXXXI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Cordatus, Hausmann's assistant, brought this letter.

March 31, 1529.

Herewith, behold the sharer in your ministerial cares and helper in your work, Herr Licentiate Cordatus, an estimable man. I hope he will help you, and do much good in your parish. Although ignorant people may not be satisfied at first they will appreciate his worth after-

¹ Amsdorf was rich.

wards. May Christ comfort you in all your tribulations ! It is a miracle that we are not swallowed up of the devil in our impotence. Those who have eyes to see must behold in us one of God's greatest works, that we insignificant creatures have been enabled to withstand so many powerful enemies and remain steadfast. Outwardly we are much harassed, and inwardly Satan takes up his abode among the children of God. But it is only a reigning Christ who can triumph over us weak ones, and will at length give us a glorious deliverance on the great day. God grant it. Christ will teach and confirm it out of Cordatus's mouth. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CLXXXII

TO NICOLAS VON AMSDORF

A marriage case.

May 4, 1529.

This is what I should recommend. Do not believe this faithless bridegroom. I agree with you to send him back, either to prove that he has never promised (which he is trying to do), or to take the bride, or remain unmarried. I have told him this.

But if matters be as you say, then he must not marry for a punishment, unless he marries her.

We know nothing definite as to the Reichstag. We daily expect Philip Melanchthon. I can scarcely lecture because of my cough. Yesterday and to-day I expounded Isaiah, but was very hoarse. Pray for us.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21.)

CLXXXIII

TO WENZEL LINK

Thanks for a gift, etc.

May 6, 1529.

Grace in Christ ! The watch, dear Wenzel, has arrived all right. But it is either weary with its journey or not accustomed to its new owner, for it has stopped.

However, with time, it appears inclined to run. I thank you warmly for it, but, being a poor man, can make no return. For the books which came out lately you must already have, and they are of such a nature that they cannot be called gifts. They are only old things brought out afresh.

God has given me a little daughter Magdalena, and the mother is very well.

The Diet is at an end, and almost without result, except that the persecutors of Christ, the tyrants of souls, could not vent their fury on us as they desired, and we could expect no more from God.

There is talk of a Council, but it will be fruitless. There is a Venetian here just now, and he says that in the last French war against the Pope there were eight hundred Turks, of whom three hundred were uninjured, and being tired of the war returned home. I thought you did not know these dreadful things, as you took no notice of them. Soon midnight will come, when the cry will be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." Pray for me. Greet our friends.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CLXXXIV

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN

Luther begs the Elector to recall Bugenhagen from Hamburg.

May 12, 1529.

Grace and peace! Serene High-born Prince. Herr John Pommer has written from Hamburg that he has arranged to return, but the people are holding him so fast that he cannot get away, and he says they intend writing your Grace to let him remain always. I have written him to resist such action, and hope they will not thus requite our goodness in lending him to them. So he now writes, begging that your Electoral Grace would write demanding his presence in Wittenberg, to prove his hurrying home is not his own wish. Therefore we humbly request your Grace would furnish us with such a

document to forward, with those from the University, ordering his return, for the classes have lain long enough waste, especially as, God be praised, students are daily arriving, principally from Saxony, so Bugenhagen cannot be longer spared. Your Grace will know how to act in the matter.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 276.)

CLXXXV

TO WENZEL LINK

May 25, 1529.

I commend to you this Scotchman, my Wenzel, who has been banished from his fatherland because of the gospel. He begged me to write you, hoping he might get some assistance. He seems of good family, and well grounded in scholastic theology.

Could he speak German we could find plenty for him to do, and, despite our poverty, have kept him with us, but he has reasons for wishing to try his fortune elsewhere.

In Philip's absence, and during my illness, I translated the book of Wisdom (Proverbs), which Philip had taken in hand. It is in the press. That which Leo Judäus of Zurich has translated is miserable in the extreme.¹ Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CLXXXVI

TO JACOB MONTANUS, PREACHER IN HERFORD

About Erasmus of Rotterdam.

May 28, 1529.

Grace and peace! I am well aware, my Jacob, of all you tell me of Erasmus, who rages against us.

I gathered as much from his writings, for in them he displays the soreness of the wound he has received. But I despise him, and do not consider the creature worthy of any other reply, and should I write shall only refer to Erasmus in the third person, and doing this more to condemn his opinions than to refute them, for he is a thought-

¹ Perhaps under Zwingli's supervision.

less "Indifferentist," who ridicules all religion in his Lucian fashion, and is only in earnest when he wishes to gratify his revenge. We are all well here, thanks to your prayers. Thanks for the present—a proof of your good feeling. I shall send you my latest works. Farewell in Christ, and continue praying for me. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

CLXXXVII

TO LANDGRAVE PHILIP OF HESSE

Luther agrees to a Conference with Œcolampadius and Zwingli.

June 23, 1529.

Grace and peace! Serene Prince, Most Gracious Lord! I have received your Grace's invitation to Marburg to the disputation with Œcolampadius and the other Swiss divines, to see if we cannot see eye to eye regarding the sacrament. Although I have little hope of this, still your Grace's anxiety for unity and peace is most laudable, and I am willing to co-operate in such vain and for us perhaps dangerous efforts, for the other party must not have the glory of outstripping me (if God will) in the desire for unity. I beseech you to learn if they feel inclined to yield their opinions, to prevent the evil becoming worse. It seems as if they were trying, through your Grace's zeal, afterwards to boast that they had moved great princes to interfere to prove that they wished peace while we were its enemies.

God grant I am no prophet, but if they were really in earnest they do not need such mighty princes to represent them; for, God be praised, we are not such worthless characters.

They might have written us long ago, saying how they wished peace, or could still do so, for I cannot yield to them, being convinced our cause is right and theirs wrong. Therefore pray consider whether this Marburg conference will do good or harm; for if they do not yield we shall part without fruit, and our meeting, as well as your Grace's outlay and trouble, have been in vain. And then they will boast, and load us with reproach, as is their wont,

so things would be worse than ever. Regarding your Grace's fears that bloodshed would ensue from such discord, you know that whatever happens we are innocent, and God will bring our innocence to the light of day. If this spirit of union should result in bloodshed, such action is in accordance with its nature, as was seen in Franz von Sickingen, Carlstadt, and Munzer; and there, too, we were blameless. I write all this to prove how ready I am to serve you. May Christ tread Satan under our feet! Amen. Your Grace's obedient MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CLXXXVIII

TO CONRAD CORDATUS

Luther says the gospel messenger must suffer persecution.

July 14, 1529.

Grace and peace! Be strong in Christ, my Cordatus, in order to put up with those ungrateful people in Zwickau. Do not think of changing your post. This is a more testing temptation than any you have had. The world is the enemy of God and His Word. It is therefore a miracle if among God's enemies any are friendly to His children. The world loves its own, so we may know that we are not of this world when she hates and despises us. Hence you have merely to put up with an incarnate devil, who, through the flesh, his sluggish tool, harasses and enervates you, but cannot, much as he wishes, injure you. But resist him with all your might. Therefore you act in a brotherly way in comforting me so lovingly and wishing me all good. Continue so to do and pray, as I do for you, that we may be set free, and till that day comes, bring forth fruit in patience. God grant this! Greet your beloved other half in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CLXXXIX

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther hears that Amsdorf is not satisfied with his post.

August 1, 1529.

Grace and peace ! Although you have not complained to me, my Amsdorf, I hear how little you have benefited from the promotion you have received from the Prince. But be steadfast. The Lord will make an end of the trouble. The Court is the devil's seat. If things do not improve I shall support you by word and deed, so that you may leave Zwickau, and shake its dust from off your feet—you and Cordatus also.

I shall consider Paul's affairs ; meantime put up with all, showing yourselves men among those troublesome people. You did not leave Cellarius's notes on Isaiah here. I searched everywhere, and found nothing. Perhaps he will pass your way and visit you. Pray to Christ for me, a poor sinner. Käthie sends friendly greeting.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CXC

TO JUSTUS JONAS

On the death of Melanchthon's son.

August 17, 1529.

Grace and peace in Christ ! Dear Jonas—Last Sabbath God the Lord took away from our Philip one of his children, called George ; so you can imagine how much we have to do in trying to comfort this tender-hearted and emotional man. He is grieving too much over the loss, not being used to such trials. Pray that the Lord may comfort him, and then, in your best rhetoric, write him a letter of consolation. You know how important it is for us that he should be spared in health. We are all sick and sad in his sickness and sadness. I can think of nothing but him, except the most intimate concerns of my daily life.

But the God of the humble and afflicted will not allow him to be vanquished, although he is still very weak.

I shall write of other things when the grief is a little assuaged.

Farewell in the Lord, and greet your fellow-bishops respectfully in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CXCI

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN OF SAXONY

Luther sends thanks for present of garments.

August 17, 1529.

Grace and peace in Christ! Most Serene High-born Prince, Most Gracious Lord! I have delayed long in returning thanks for the garments your Grace has so kindly sent me.

But I humbly beg you not to believe people who try to make your Electoral Grace think I am in want. I have, alas, more than I can reconcile it with my conscience, especially from your Electoral Highness, to accept. And as a preacher it is not seemly for me to have superfluity. Therefore I sometimes tremble because of your Grace's generosity towards me, in case I may be found in this life among those to whom Christ says, "Woe to you rich : for you have your reward here."

But to use common language, I have no desire to be burdensome to your Grace, for you have so much to give away that I know you have little over, and the purse may be rent asunder if so many demands be made upon it.

It was superfluous sending the leather-coloured cloth, but I feel much indebted to your Grace for it, and I shall wear the black coat in honour of your munificence, although too costly for me ; and were it not your Grace's gift I would never appear in such a garment. Therefore, I beseech your Grace to wait till I myself complain and beg, so that your kindness may not make me shy of asking favours for others who are much more worthy of your bounty.

For your Grace loads me with too many benefits.

Christ will graciously reimburse you for all this. I pray for this with my whole heart. Amen. Your Grace's humble servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CXCII

TO JOHN BRENZ, IN SCHWABIAN HALLE

Luther praises his exposition of Amos, etc.

August 29, 1529.

Grace and peace in Christ! I perused your Amos, my esteemed and learned Brentius. Far be it from me to suggest any alterations, for I cannot set up as a master in the divine writings.

I only wish to be a learner in that school. The friend to whom you entrusted its publication intentionally delayed it, fearing attacks from the printers. But it shall be printed, if he'll listen to me.

Concerning the Hesse Conference, of which you write, and to which you are summoned, you are right. Nothing good is likely to ensue from such a hole-and-corner coming together of the Churches of God. Therefore I beg of you not to appear, and, if you have not promised to go, remain away. At first we absolutely refused, but as this young Hessian Alexander so worried our Princes, we had to promise, but persisted it would result in no good, and only make matters worse. But he stuck to his point, so we yielded; if he would also invite some talented Papists, who could bear witness against these boasters and remarkable saints who are to be there! Although I long to see you, I shall rather forgo the pleasure than enjoy it to the detriment of the cause. May Christ build you up to His own glory! Amen. Pray for me, a sinner.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CXCIII

TO HIS WIFE

In September Zwingli, with the Greek professor in Zurich, started for Marburg, Bucer, Hedio, Œcolampadius, etc., joining

them in Strassburg. On September 30, Luther, Melanchthon, Jonas, Cruciger and Myconius, Osiander, Brenz, etc., also came.

October 4, 1529.

Grace and peace in Christ! Dear Käthie—Our friendly conference at Marburg is almost ended, and we have agreed upon nearly all points, except that our opponents maintain that only the bread and wine are present in the sacrament, although admitting Christ's spiritual presence in the elements. To-day the Landgrave is making every effort to unite us, or at least to make us consider each other brethren and members of Christ's body. He is doing his best to accomplish this. But although we object to be brethren, we wish to live at peace and on good terms. I fancy we shall set out to-morrow or next day, and go to your gracious lord in Vogtland, whither His Electoral Grace has summoned us.

Say to Herr Pommer that Zwingli's argument was the best: "Corpus non potest esse sine loco, ergo Christi corpus non est in pane"; that of Œcolampadius was: "Sacramentum est signum corporis Christi."

I consider God has blinded them, that they cannot achieve anything good. I have much to do, and the messenger waits. Good-night to all, and pray for us. We are all well and lively, and living like princes. Kiss Lenchen and Hanschen for me. Your obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—They are all quite excited over the sweating sickness.¹ Fifty were seized yesterday, of whom two have died.

(De Wette.)

CXCIV

TO JOHN LANGE

October 28, 1529.

Grace in Christ! I commend Magister Wolfgang to your love, my Lange, so that if possible you may help him to a situation. He is a good man, and well up in the sciences, and thoroughly grounded in our faith, so is well

¹ English sickness.

fitted to be pastor, secretary, or teacher. You know how the Turks destroyed Vienna, and then fled in their despair from Germany, which we regarded as a miracle of God.

Only we dear Germans slumber on. Farewell in Christ, and give your little son, as well as his mother, many kisses as a greeting. MARTIN LUTHER.

CXCXV

TO FREDERICK MYCONIUS, AT GOTHÄ

Luther wishes to hear of John Hilten in Eisenach.

November 7, 1529.

Grace and peace! Your letters, my Frederick, were most welcome, being full of brotherly love, and also a proof of your kindness in finding out what I wished.

I expect your promised letter shortly. You will already know all about the Turks. God fought for us, driving them away through a marvellous fright. We must beg God to be our wall, and send His angels to help us. We cannot sufficiently laud your faith, in praying against the Turks and the gates of hell, with your congregation. God hear you in our day of trouble; even as the angel could not destroy Sodom because of one Lot, so may it be with us on account of the many pious people here. Amen. There is nothing new here. Philip is from home, or he would have written. He and Amsdorf are honouring the marriage of Herr Trutleben in Freyberg with their presence. Many greetings from my Käthie, the head of the house. Greet your wife, who may be your lord as well, and our hostess, and Basilius, and your justiciary, and may you prosper greatly in Christ!

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CXCXVI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

About the Turkish war, etc.

November 10, 1529.

Grace and peace! Be strong in the Lord, my dear Nicolas, and do not be afraid of the Turks. Christ lives,

and the Prophet Daniel (which Philip and Jonas are at present publishing), so we hope he will not be able to subdue Germany, although he is punishing us for our neglect of the gospel. For it is really a miracle that the Turk has vanished from his camp, leading people to believe that the day of judgment is at hand, when Gog the Turk and Magog the Pope, the political and the spiritual opponents of Christ, will both be overthrown. I wish you much happiness on being ridiculed as a pietist, and that you are deemed worthy of Satan's hatred, who can only injure you by stirring up poisonous tongues against you. Laugh at his impotence, for you cannot wound him more than by being invulnerable to his sting. I wish the bride Christina joy, and when looking for a wife I trust you will be as fortunate; but if you have no desire, and can do without one, you will be far happier, and I shall wish you joy all the same. Not that I would malign matrimony—that God-appointed institution—but because you are free from manifold troubles and household cares; to this I wish you joy. May Christ teach you and keep you well, and cause you to pray for me! Farewell in Him.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1374.)

CXCVII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN

Request to have Emser's New Testament suppressed.

Rostock became Evangelical in 1527 through the earnest preaching of Slüter, the Rostock reformer, who was poisoned in 1532.

November 23, 1529.

To the Serene High-born Prince, the Elector John of Saxony. Grace and peace in Christ! Some prominent citizens of Lubeck have written informing us that some Lollards have caused Emser's New Testament to be printed in Rostock, in Saxon, through which they fear much mischief may be done, and have begged me to request your Grace to petition the Herzog of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, for God's honour and the good of souls, to forbid its publication.

For although I have nothing against the Emser Testament, whose contents the rascals have wickedly stolen from me (for it is precisely my text, with a few harmless alterations), yet since he has reissued it, so scandalously mangled with his annotations, and accompanied by a glossary which prevents it bearing any fruit, but rather does harm, I beseech your Electoral Grace graciously to present this petition to the highly esteemed Herzog Heinrich, and let us have the answer by the messenger who brings this, for as much as in us lies we must defend ourselves against the devil. May Christ our Lord be with your Grace to all eternity! Amen. Your Electoral Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CXCVIII

TO DOROTHEA MACKENROD, LUTHER'S SISTER

Luther promises a gospel sermon.

December 2, 1529.

Dear Sister—I see from your letter to me how earnestly your heavily laden conscience longs for an Evangelical sermon of consolation, and, if possible, in your own church in Rossla.

I am delighted to hear this, and have made up my mind, in God, to come to you on the approaching Christmas Eve, and to preach, with God's help, the first gospel sermon at Rossla and upper Rossla as a memorial. Greet your husband and the little Margareta, to whom I shall bring something with me. I commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

EISLEBEN.

(Date doubtful, as it is improbable no gospel sermon had been preached there so late as 1529.)

CXCIX

TO FRIEDRICH, ABBOT IN NÜRNBERG

December 29, 1529.

To the much honoured in Christ, Herr Friedrich, superintendent in St. Ægidius, Nürnberg, my superior in the Lord.

Grace and peace in Christ ! I have nothing, and yet a very great deal to write to you, my honoured friend in Christ. Concerning myself I have nothing, except to commend myself to your sacred prayers, but in regard to the bridegroom, your fellow-citizen, that most excellent young man, Conrad Mauser, I have a great deal. Doubtless your large heart will know that were I to write a letter at all commensurate with the greatness of this burning love which has been kindled in the bridegroom's heart, perhaps the whole world could not contain it. But I am only joking in order to gain your sympathy for Mauser's marriage. For he desires through you to gain his parents' consent to his happy union.

This will certainly be accomplished if you can make the father see that his son has really chosen a pretty and, what is even better, a capable and virtuous maiden, and I would add Christian, if the value of the term had not sunk in the estimation of the people through its indiscriminate use, although it is not so with us.

And the bride's father is not nearly so badly off as the most of the burghers are here, but is a member of the Town Council and well-to-do—in short, a most honourable man, who looks well to the ways of his household, and has a most industrious wife, who is universally loved because of her amiability.

You will have the goodness to bring all this to the knowledge of Mauser's father when you have the opportunity, so that he may not grieve his son, but cause him to rejoice through his consent, without which he will not marry.

It is much to be desired that the father, to show his approval, should appear at the wedding. And we are most anxious to have your presence also, but we fear to present an impossible request to you. May the kindness of your heart prompt you to do what is right in your eyes, and may you prosper in Christ ! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

1530

Diet of Augsburg held. The Elector started for Augsburg, April 3, with a brilliant retinue. Luther was left at Coburg. Charles V. made his grand entry into Augsburg, June 15. The Augsburg Confession read on June 25, and the Roman Catholic Confutation of the same was presented August 3. Melancthon prepared the "Apology" of the Augsburg Confession, a noble and learned document, which the Emperor refused to receive till many alterations were made upon it.

CC

TO HIS SICK FATHER, HANS LUTHER

February 16, 1530.

To my dear father, Hans Luther, burgher of Mansfeld. Grace and peace! My brother Jacob has written saying how ill you are. I am very anxious about you, as things seem so black everywhere just now. For although God has hitherto blessed you with good health, still your advanced age fills me with concern. I would have come to you had I not been dissuaded from tempting God by running into temptation, for you know how interested both lords and all are in my welfare. It would be a great joy to us if my mother and you would come here. My Käthie and all ask this with tears; and we would nurse you tenderly. I have sent Cyriac to see if you are able. For I should like to be near you, and, in obedience to the Fifth Commandment, cherish you with child-like kindness to show my gratitude to God and you. Meantime I pray God to keep you through His Spirit, so that you may discern the teaching of His Son, who has called you out of the blackness of error to preserve you to Christ's joyous appearing. For He has set this seal to your faith, that He has brought much shame, contempt, and enmity upon you for my sake.

For, these are the true signs of our likeness to Christ, for as St. Paul says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." So remember in your weakness that we have an Advocate with the Father who died to take away

our sins, and now sits with the angels, waiting for us, so that when our hour comes to leave the world we need not fear being lost, His power over death and sin being so complete.

He who cannot lie has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive." And the Psalms are full of such precious promises, especially the 91st., which is so suited for sick people. I write thus because of your illness, and as we do not know the hour . . . so that I may be a partaker of your faith, conflict, and consolation, and gratitude to God for His Holy Word, which He has so abundantly bestowed on us at this time. If it be His Divine Will not to transplant you at once to that better life, but let you remain a little longer with us for the help of others, then He will give you grace to accept your lot in an obedient spirit.

For this life is truly a vale of tears, where the longer one remains the more wickedness and misery one sees; and this never ceases till the hour of our departure sounds and we fall asleep in Jesus, till He comes and gives us a joyful awaking. Amen! I herewith commit you to Him who loves you better than you do yourself, having paid the penalty of your sins with His blood, so that you need have no anxiety. Leave Him to see to everything. He will do all well, and has already done so in a far higher degree than we can imagine.

May this dear Saviour be with you, and we shall shortly meet again with Christ, as the departure from this world is a much smaller thing with God than if I said farewell to you in Mansfeld to come here, or if you bade adieu to me in Wittenberg to return to Mansfeld. It is only a case of one short hour's sleep, and then all will be changed.

I hope your pastors render you faithful service in such matters, so that my chatter may not be needed, but I could not refrain from apologising for my bodily absence, which is a great trial to me. My Kätie, Hanschen, Lenchen, Muhme Lene, all salute you and pray for you. Give my love to my dear mother and all the relations.

Your dear son,

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther speaks of his Biblical work, etc.

February 25, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ ! Your last letter, dear Hausmann, was a great pleasure to me because of that noble simplicity of spirit which characterises all you write, as well as being an expression of your hearty good-will towards myself. Please draw out once more a list of what your church requires. For it must always be before me, as I cannot burden my memory with it, so that when I have leisure and the opportunity I might fulfil your desires. My mind being so occupied with my daily concerns, it is forgotten, and time passes without your wishes being attended to.

We are busy with the publication of Daniel, as a consolation in those latter days. We have also undertaken Jeremiah and the rest of the prophets.

We shall offer the New Testament for sale at the approaching Fair (*Messe*) in Frankfort, and in such a way as to create fresh alarm among the Papists.

For we have written a long preface to the Apocalypse, and furnished it with notes.

Continue to pray for us. My Käthie sends friendly greetings.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze, from Aurifaber's unprinted collection.)

CCII

TO THE HONOURABLE ADAM ADAMUS

March 5, 1530.

Grace and peace in the Lord ! I am delighted with your zeal as to the true teaching of the sacrament, and read your treatise. Perhaps your ideas on . . . are a little sharp, but what of that when nothing will convince them ? When I have time I shall write on the 6th chapter of John ; and is it strange if I sometimes write vehemently ?

Were you in my place, perhaps you would be more violent. Every man is differently constituted, hence the impressions which outward things make on him vary. There has been no discussion among you, so you only see things from afar, but "opportunity makes the man," as the proverb says.

That our Marburg Conference should have offended many is no wonder, for the other party would not let themselves be instructed.

The Zwinglians have been convicted of so many errors, even according to their own showing, that it is provoking one article should have prevented them agreeing with us. But can we force the vanquished to a confession? For Christ, in spite of having often convicted the Pharisees and Sadducees of sin, could never get them to confess their faults. Your best plan is not to listen to such people, who always look for offences, while they studiously avoid having an open eye for what is good, and from which they might profit. I dislike coming in contact with such people, who always find something to calumniate.

I commit you to God ; pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—I have written to the Prince of Liegnitz, but have little hope of arranging anything through letters.

CCIII

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

This letter accompanied Amsdorf's defence of Luther against Erasmus.

March 12, 1530.

Grace and peace ! I return your notes on Erasmus, as you request. I was struck by your remark that Erasmus had long ago declared before Luther that faith without good works justified a man, but that he said later, this was how he understood the Mosaic law. If Erasmus really said this I know not, but I know you were always very sure of what you asserted, that you might not play into

the hands of our enemies. Now be brave, for Agramus is writing in defence of Erasmus. But likely it may end as Eck's defence of the Pope did. If the fools kept silence it would be better for Erasmus, but God sends him such champions in His wrath. If spared I shall comb their locks for them in a way they will feel. I have still weapons in my armoury which they have not. May you prosper in the Lord Jesus, who lives not only during Erasmus's life, but to all eternity! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCIV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Regarding the coming Diet.

March 14, 1530.

All hail! The Elector has written to you, Pomeranus, Philip, and me, to leave everything and arrange by next Sunday all that is needful for the Imperial Diet.

For the Emperor Charles will, according to his proclamation, be at Augsburg himself to try to come to an amicable settlement. Therefore to-day and to-morrow we three shall work as hard as we can in your absence (on the visitation).

Nevertheless enough will remain for you to do to justify you in leaving your college work and joining us to-morrow. For we must hurry. God grant that all may redound to His glory! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 795.)

CCV

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

The theologians tried to prevent the Elector going to Augsburg, but he said, "I too shall confess my Lord Christ along with you."

April 2, 1530.

Leonhardt has brought me the book you have written. I shall discuss it with my friends, for I admit that were Christ's history and deeds to be reproduced before the children in a dramatic form it might interest

the young and win their love. I accompany the Prince to Coburg with Philip and Jonas till we know the course of events at Augsburg.

Meantime, you with your congregation must pray earnestly for this Diet, also for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 1792.)

CCVI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

April 18, 1530.

Grace and peace! Cordatus will have told you that we are still in Coburg, and do not know when we may go further. For we heard yesterday that the Emperor keeps Easter at Mantua, and that the Papists are trying to prevent the Reichstag, fearing what might be decreed against them there.

And the Pope is angry at the Emperor, who wishes to hear both sides, interfering in spiritual matters.

His Holiness intended him only to be his executioner against the heretics, and restore his authority. For the Papists' sole wish is that we should be condemned and they reinstalled in their former position; and thus they shall perish! The Prince has ordered me to remain at Coburg, while the others go to the Diet. Florence has neither been taken nor reconciled to the Pope, a grief to His Holiness; for those inside declared for the Emperor therefore those outside would not proceed against them, but raised the blockade. You see what our prayers can achieve.

The Turk promises peace next year, but threatens to return to Germany, and even bring Tartars with him. But God's Word and our prayers shall fight against them. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCVII

FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO WENZEL LINK

April 22, 1530.

So far we are sitting quietly in Coburg, knowing nothing certain about the Reichstag or the Emperor's arrival.

You will perhaps have more reliable news than we have. Although my good friends may follow the Elector to Augsburg, he is determined that I shall remain. You will meet Philip, Jonas, Eisleben,¹ and Spalatin there, and learn from them if the Diet still goes on.

MARTIN LUTHER.

COBURG.

CCVIII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

April 22, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ! We have at last reached our Sinai, my dear Herr Philip, but out of this Sinai we shall make a Zion and build three tabernacles: one to the Psalter, one to the Prophets, and one to Æsop. But time is needed for this. This is a most agreeable spot, most suitable for study, only I miss you greatly.

I get quite excited when I think of the Turks and Mahomed, and of the diabolic fury which they vent on our bodies and souls. But at such times I shall pray fervently till He who dwells in Heaven shall hear my petition. I see you are much distressed at the sight of those cowed monks who seem quite at home. But it is our fate to be spectators of the fierce onslaughts of these two realms and remain steadfast; and this onslaught is a sign and harbinger of our redemption. I pray that you may have refreshing sleep, and keep your soul free from care and from the fiery darts of the Evil One. Amen. I write this to while away my idle time, as my box with papers, etc., has not arrived. I have not seen the castle steward yet.

Meanwhile I want for nothing necessary to a solitary being. The great building which projects from the castle has been placed entirely at my disposal, and the keys of all the rooms have been put into my hands. There are over thirty men in the castle, among whom are twelve watchmen and two warders for the towers. But why write all this? only I have nothing else to write. Greet Dr. Caspar Cruciger and Magister Spalatin from me.

¹ Agricola.

I shall greet Eisleben and Adler through Dr. Jonas.
From the region of the birds. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 2827.)

CCIX

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther writes about the birds which enliven his solitude, although Veit Dietrich and his nephew were with him.

April 22, 1530.

Grace and peace! At last we are sitting here up amongst the clouds, in the kingdom of the birds, whose harsh tones, all screaming together, produce a very Babel, the daws or ravens having taken up their quarters before our eyes, forming a forest in front of us.

I can assure you there was a shrieking. It goes on from four in the morning far into the night, so that I believe there is no other place where so many birds gather as here.

And not one is silent for a moment, old and young, mothers with daughters, singing a song of praise.

Perhaps they sing thus sweetly to lull us to sleep, which God grant we may enjoy to-night. The daw is to my mind a most useful bird. I fancy they signify a whole army of sophists, etc., who have assembled from the ends of the earth so that I may profit by their wisdom, enjoy their delicious song, and rejoice in their useful services in both the secular and spiritual realm. At present the nightingale is not to be heard, although its forerunner and imitator, the cuckoo, is raising its exquisite voice.

I am scarce of news, but rather send a jocular letter than none, especially as the daws fill heaven and earth with their melody. The Lord be with you! Let us pray for each other, for we need it urgently. Greet all friends. Farewell, from the kingdom of the daws.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 2126.)

CCX

TO HIS WIFE AND HOUSEHOLD

April 28, 1530.

Grace and peace, my dear Käthie, sirs, and friends!

I have received all your letters telling me how you get along. I must now inform you that I, Magister Veit, and Cyriac are not to be at the Diet, although we have one here. For there is a thicket just under our window like a small forest, where the daws and crows hold their diet, and such a running to and fro, and screaming night and day, that I often wonder they are not hoarse.

As yet I have not seen their emperor, but the courtiers are always prancing about dressed simply in black, with grey eyes, and all sing the same melody. They pay no heed to castle or hall; for their salon is vaulted by the beautiful canopy of heaven, while their feet rest on the broad fields with their green carpet and trees, the walls of their house reaching to the ends of the earth. They are independent of horses and carriages, for they have feathered wheels by which they escape the sportsmen's bullets. I fancy they have come together to have a mighty onslaught on corn, barley, wheat, etc. Many a knight will win his laurels here.

So here we sit, watching the gay life of song led by princes, etc., preparatory to a vigorous attack on the grain.

I always fancy it is the Sophists and Papists I see before me, so that I may hear their lovely voices and their sermons, and see for myself what a useful kind of people these are who consume all the fruits of the earth, and then strut about in their grand clothing to while away the time.

To-day we heard the first nightingale. The weather has been splendid. I commit you to God; see well to the house. From the Diet of malt Turks.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXI

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther writes about his work.

May 8, 1530.

Grace and peace! You accuse me, dear Wenzel, of silence, even of indifference, and blame me, although you

have had four living epistles from me, besides the letter about John Ernest. So I have good cause for putting you in the wrong, for volumes would not answer my four epistles. Otherwise I have complete repose and enjoy every luxury here, and have begun translating the remaining Prophets, having finished Jeremiah. Perhaps I shall issue some Psalms with an exposition so as not to be idle.

I also propose translating *Æsop's Fables* for the German children. So I now see how to fill up the time, although I should prefer being with you. But I am pleased with what God wills. Certainly, I would have been more useful at home, through teaching and counsel, but I dared not withstand the call.

There is nothing new at Wittenberg except that Dr. Pommer writes that the Lübeck and Lüneberg people are embracing the gospel, and that the preaching there is most earnest and faithful. God be praised!

I fear God may pour out the phials of His wrath on North Germany, as I hear of nothing but murders and contempt of God and His Word. Pray for me, as I do for you. For the Turk is not arming himself for nothing.

From the diet of the daws, which is being held here.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 2829.)

CCXII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther complains of headache, probably from overwork.

May 12, 1530.

Grace and peace! Dear Herr Philip—On May 8 I began to answer your letter from Nürnberg, but was prevented finishing it.

I have sent my admonition to the clergy to Wittenberg.

Besides, I have translated the two chapters in Ezekiel, concerning Gog, with a preface. I then began translating the Prophets, intending to have them finished by Ascension, along with *Æsop*, and would have managed it, so

smoothly did the work proceed, when, alas, suddenly the outward man collapsed, unable to sustain the fervour of the inner renewed man.

I felt a loud buzzing and roaring, like thunder, in my head, and had I not stopped at once I would have fainted, and was useless for two days.

The machine will do no more, my head having dwindled into a short chapter, which by degrees will shrink into a tiny paragraph, and then into a single sentence.

This is why I sit in idleness, but the noise in my head is subsiding through medicine. This accounts for the delay. The day your Nürnberg letter came I had a Satanic embassy with me, and, to make matters worse, I was quite alone, neither Veit nor Cyriac being here, so Satan remained so far master of the field, compelling me to seek society.

I impatiently await the time when I shall behold the almost sublime majesty of this spirit.

So much for our own little concerns, while weighty events are taking place.

You say that Eck along with — are beginning a conflict. What are they about in the Reichstag? The coarse asses palaver about important affairs in our churches. We hope their downfall shall be hastened thereby.

Magister Joachim has sent me dried figs and raisins, and writes me in Greek! When better I shall reply in Turkish, to let him have something to read which he cannot understand. Why should he write to me in Greek? Shall write more again in case of tasking my head now. Let us pray for each other.

I must write to the Electoral Prince about the Landgrave, as you advise, and also to the Elector. The Lord be with you.

Take care of your health, and do not injure your head, as I have done. I shall request our friends to try to prevent you overstepping the limitations which your health demands; spare yourself, so that you may not be a self-murderer, and then declare that God willed it so.

One can serve God in repose, and there is no better way of serving Him. This is why He insists on the Sabbath being strictly kept. Now do not throw this counsel to the winds. It is God's Word I write you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 2830.)

CCXIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN THE STEADFAST OF SAXONY

Concerning Evangelical preaching in Augsburg. It was here the Elector won the name of "Steadfast" through refusing to allow Evangelical preaching to be suppressed.

May 15, 1530.

Most Serene High-born Prince! I have read Philip's Apology, with which I am delighted, and do not think it can be improved, or require any alteration; and it would be unseemly for me to try to do so, for I could not word it so softly and sweetly.

May Christ our Lord grant that it may bring forth much fruit, as we hope and pray. Amen.

As to the question whether, if His Imperial Majesty forbids the Evangelical preaching, you should submit, my opinion is still the same. The Emperor is our lord, the town and all being his, so that as no one should disobey you in your own town of Torgau, neither should it be done in Augsburg. No doubt it would be well if he were humbly asked not to forbid the preaching without hearing it, but to send some one to hear how they preach before condemning it. Certainly His Majesty should not forbid the pure preaching of the Word, as nothing seditious is being proclaimed. If this do not avail, then might must stand for right. We have done our best, and are blameless. I have humbly tried to answer the question. May the Lord mercifully support you through His Holy Spirit! Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXIV

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther begs him to tell Justus Jonas of his child's death.

May 15, 1530.

Grace and peace ! I ordered this letter to be given to you, for I knew of no other way of letting Justus Jonas hear of his son's death.

Communicate it to him very gently. His wife and *famulus* certainly prepared him for it. My people wrote that they stood over his death-bed, and he died of the same illness which so lately deprived him of his first Fritz.

The child was always sickly. I shall delay writing in case of increasing his sorrow. I am tormented on all sides, but we shall not let our courage sink. This is our hour of sorrow, but, like the woman who rejoiced when her son was born, we too shall look forward to a joyful time. So let us bid adieu to our foolish lamenting ; for our cause, prayers, and hopes rest with Him who is faithful to His promises. Speak comfortably to the man who, in the world's eyes, is bowed down with sorrow, causing it to rejoice in our affliction. The Lord be with you !

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCXV

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN OF SAXONY

The Elector would not permit the preaching to be stopped.

May 20, 1530.

Grace and peace ! Most Serene Prince ! I have delayed answering your most gracious letter from Augsburg, with all its news and admonitions not to let the time hang on my hands. It is most kind of you troubling about me, and here we are most anxious about your Serene Highness, and pray constantly for you. I do not find the days long. We live like lords, and this last week seems hardly three days.

But your Grace is at present in a most tiresome spot. Your Highness is certainly enduring all this trouble, expense, danger, and ennui solely for God's sake, as no one can find any fault with you except on account of the pure Word of God, for all know you to be a blameless, pious, and quiet Prince. And it proves that God loves you dearly, seeing He considers you worthy to suffer so much enmity for conscience' sake. For God's friendship is more precious than that of the whole world put together.

Besides, the merciful God is displaying His loving-kindness in making His Word so fruitful in your Grace's land.

For there is a greater number of excellent pastors and preachers therein than in any other land, who teach the truth, thus helping to preserve peace.

The young people, too, are so well instructed in Scripture and Catechism that I feel quite touched when I see young boys and girls praying and talking more of God and Christ than they ever could do in all the cloisters and schools of bygone days.

Truly your Grace's land is a beautiful land for such young people, and God has, so to speak, erected this paradise in your Grace's lap as a special token of His favour, placing them under your protection that you may be their gardener. For God, whose bread all your subjects eat, wishes you to care for them, even as if God Himself were your Electoral Highness's daily guest.

One sees the injury young people receive at the hands of godless princes, who, out of this paradise of God, make idle, sinful servants of the devil. For with all their wealth God does not think them worthy to spread His work, or even give a cup of cold water—nay, they had nothing better to give the Saviour on the cross than vinegar and gall to drink.

In conclusion, your Electoral Grace has ever had the earnest prayers of all Christians in your lands especially, and we know our prayers will be heard, because what we ask is good.

Oh that the young people may join, and with their innocent petitions commend you, as their dear father, to

the merciful God! Your Grace will graciously accept this letter, for God knows I speak the truth and do not dissemble. I am sorry that Satan is grieving your heart. He is a doleful, disagreeable spirit, who cannot bear to see any one happy, especially in God, so how much less will he suffer your Electoral Highness to be of good courage, for he knows how many depend on you for edification through the living Word in your domains!

So we must stand by you with our prayers and love, for when you are joyous, then we live; but when you sorrow, then we are sick.

But our dear Saviour will send the Holy Ghost, the true Comforter, who will protect your Grace against the poisoned darts of this sour, bitter spirit. Amen. Your Electoral Grace's obedient MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXVI

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther speaks of the pilgrimage to Coburg.

June 2, 1530.

Yesterday Hans Reinecke from Mansfeld and George Römer were with me, and to-day Argula von Staufen.

Now that so many are finding their way here, I intend either not to let it be known I am at home or go out for the day, so that people may think I have left. Pray try to prevent people coming here. I write in Johannine haste, for I shall remain hidden. They say the bishops will succeed in postponing the Reichstag till, at least, the provisions are all consumed, compelling the people to return home.

The Emperor is using every device to prevent the Elector of Treves coming to the Diet. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXVII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther speaks of his father's death.

June 5, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ! In my last I complained,

my Philip, of you returning a messenger empty handed to me, and two have come since—Appel, and now the driver with the Coburg game. And so many of you there who have usually a mania for writing! I do not know if it be carelessness, or if you are displeased with me, for you know in my solitude how I long for letters, as in a dry and parched land.

We hear the Emperor has ordered the Augsburg people to dismiss the hired soldiers and remove the barricades.

Argula von Staufen told me of the magnificent reception the Elector of Bavaria gave the Emperor in Munich, there being plays and entertainments in his honour. From Nürnberg I hear the Papists wish to prevent him visiting Augsburg.

If this be true, then it shows God's hatred towards them in not answering our prayers for them. Hans Reinecke writes that my beloved father, old Hans Luther, died at one on Sabbath morning.

This death has cast me into deep grief, not only because he was my father, but because it was through his deep love to me that my Creator endowed me with all I am and have, and although consoled to learn that he fell asleep softly in Christ Jesus, strong in faith, yet his loss has caused a deep wound in my heart.

Thus are the righteous taken away from the evil to come and enter into rest. I am now heir to the name, being the eldest Luther in the family, so it beseemeth me to follow him into Christ's kingdom, who gave him unto us. I am too sad to write more to-day, and it is only right to mourn such a father, who by the sweat of his brow made me what I am.

But I rejoiced that he lived to behold the light of the truth. Amen. Greet all our friends.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCXVIII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther again blames his friends for not writing.

June 11, 1530.

Grace and peace ! I now see that you have all entered into a compact to torture us by your silence. But I herewith announce that we shall now vie with you in your silence, although possibly that will not disturb you.

I must praise the Wittenberg people, who, although as busy as you, have written thrice before you sluggards wrote once.

I have received letters of condolence from every quarter, on my father's death. If you wish, you can hear the particulars from Michael Cœlin's letter.

I lay down the pen, so that my constant writing may not drive you into a more persistent silence.

Greet our people. The grace of God be with you ! Amen. My wife writes that the Elbe is dry, for no rain has fallen. Much water, many adventures. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCXIX

TO CASPAR VON TEUTLEBEN

Von Teutleben was a brother-in-law of Amsdorf, and managed the Elector's business in Rome.

June 19, 1530.

Grace and peace ! Esteemed and deeply learned Doctor and good Friend—I was delighted to hear that your Sophie and you are well. I have nothing new to write, for our silent Junkers send no letters from Augsburg, which annoys me greatly. And I know your brother-in-law, my good friend Herr Nicolas Amsdorf, would be indignant if he knew they had become so taciturn, especially at this time. He can be their judge.

From hearsay I learn that Venice has sent several thousand gulden to the Emperor, and Florence offered him

five tons of gold, which cannot be accepted, as the Pope has promised to supply him with all that is needful, and the French, with their "par ma foi," have done the same—truly a good joke ; but who would rely on such promises ?

But I have heard from Dr. Martin Luther himself that even were Venice, the Pope, and Francis loyal to the Emperor, and not each thinking of his own advantage, still they are three different beings in one person, each of whom has an inconceivable hatred against His Imperial Majesty, meanwhile deceiving him, through hypocrisy and lies, till they either perish themselves, or drag that pious, noble youth into difficulty and distress. For "par ma foi" cannot forget the defeat at Pavia, and the Pope, being an Italian, and a Florentine to boot, and a child of the devil, cannot forget the disgrace of the plunder of Rome, no matter how cheerful he tries to appear ; and as for the Venetians—they are only Venetians—and excuse their wrath under the pretext of revenging Maximilian's death. May God help the pious Charles, who is truly a sheep among wolves ! Amen. Greet your dear Sophie from me. I commend you to God. From the desert.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXX

TO CONRAD CORDATUS

On June 15 Charles entered Augsburg, the Elector of Saxony bearing the sword before him.

June 19, 1530.

Grace and peace ! I write, dear Conrad, to show you I have not forgotten my promise. For I sit here, and there is little hope of my being called to the Reichstag ; but, should I go, I shall let you know.

Your dear vicar (colleague), Herr Hausmann, tells me that you are determined to go, but I question if it would be expedient, as your work would suffer ; and it is still doubtful if the religious question would be dealt with, and if it is, whether it may not be in secret, as the Emperor has forbidden a public discussion. We hear no news, as our Augsburg friends never write ; but it seems certain

that the Emperor entered the town on June 15. May Christ give His blessing thereto! Let us pray without ceasing. The Lord Jesus still lives and reigns. By the grace of God and your petitions I am pretty well, although Satan troubles me with a buzzing in my ears, but in spite of this I have put Jeremiah into German. Now I shall begin Ezekiel, but first of all must send a few things for our poor printers, among them my "Confitemini," which I shall finish in two days. Greet my dearest Herr Hausmann, and say I shall answer his letter very soon.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 2833.)

CCXXI

TO HIERONYMUS WELLER

Luther thanks him for looking after his son.

June 19, 1530.

Grace and peace! I have received two letters from you, my beloved Hieronymus, two charming letters, the second of which was the most delightful, in which you speak of my son Hans as his pedagogue, and he your diligent pupil.

God grant I may some day be able to requite you for this. May Christ make up for my shortcomings!

Magister Veit tells me that at times you are a prey to a spirit of melancholy—a temptation which is most prejudicial to the young. The Scripture says: "A broken spirit drieth the bones." And the Holy Spirit, in various parts of the Bible, bids us try to banish these forebodings. In Ecclesiastes we read, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth." "Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart," etc.

A joyful heart is life to a man, and an unceasing fountain of health, and prolongs his years. Many have allowed themselves to be consumed of grief, and it has been of no avail. But be sure that these black thoughts proceed from the devil, for God is not a God of sadness, but of consolation and joy. Is not joy in the Lord real life? So drive away such thoughts. The struggle is hard to begin with, but it gradually becomes easier; and

it is common to all the saints, but they struggle and achieve the victory. The great secret in this conflict is to disregard these thoughts and despise their hissings as if they were a flock of geese, and pass by. Remember the Israelites, who overcame the fiery serpents by directing their gaze to the brazen serpent. This is certain victory in this conflict.

Therefore beware, my Jerome, of letting them lodge in thy heart. A wise man, in reply to one sorely tempted, said : " You cannot prevent birds fleeing over your head, but you can hinder them building in your hair." God takes no pleasure in such sorrow. Sorrow over our sins is very different. It is a sweet sorrow, in view of forgiveness ; but that which proceeds from the devil has no promises annexed. It is of no avail.

When I return we shall discuss this. Greet your brother, to whom I have begun a letter, but the messenger waits. May Christ comfort and cheer you ! I commend you to your pupils.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXXII

TO HIS SON HANS

June 19, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ be with thee, my dear little son ! I am very pleased to see you so diligent, and also praying. Continue to do so, my child, and when I return I shall bring you something from the great Fair (*Messe*). I know a beautiful garden, where there are many children with golden robes. They pick up the rosy-cheeked apples, pears, plums, etc., from under the trees, sing, jump, and rejoice all day long. They have also pretty ponies with golden reins and silver saddles. I asked whose garden it was, and to whom the children belonged. The man said, " These are the children who love to pray and learn their lessons." I then said, " Dear sir, I also have a son, Hanschen Luther ; might not he too come into the garden and eat the beautiful fruit, and ride upon these pretty ponies, and play with those children ? " " If he loves

prayer and is good," said the man, "he can, and Lippus and Jost;¹ and they shall get whistles and drums, and all sorts of musical instruments, and dance, and shoot with little cross-bows." And he showed me a lovely lawn, all ready for dancing, where whistles, flutes, etc., hung. But it was early, and the children not having breakfasted, I could not wait for the dancing, so I said to the man, "Dear sir, I must hurry away and write all this to my dear little son Hans, and tell him to pray and be good, that he may come into this garden; but he has an Aunt Lene,² whom he must bring also." "That he can," said the man; "write him to do so." Therefore, dear little sonny, learn your lessons and pray, and tell Lippus and Jost to do so too, and then you will all get into the garden together. I commend you to God, and give Aunt Lene a kiss from me. Thy dear father,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXXIII

TO PETER WELLER

June 19, 1530.

As the messenger has delayed his departure for an hour, I shall greet you by letter, although we have no reliable news of the Augsburg proceedings. First of all, accept my best thanks for you and your brother staying in my country house to protect my family, who are delighted to have such protection.

I only hope I may some day be able to repay the service. For myself I am pretty well, although I suffered from—not a buzzing, but a roll of thunder in my head, and cannot think whence it came.

Our heroes at the Diet are running about helter-skelter, or rather driving about in carriages, steering through the air with their rudders. They enter the arena of conflict early, then give us a truce during the day, and with the sound of the trombone proclaim their victory in our ears,

¹ The sons of Melancthon and Jonas.

² Katherine von Bora's aunt, who lived with them.

while they plunder, steal, and devour everything, being at war with the fruits of the ground.

At night they return home and snore peacefully till morning. Lately we made a raid into their palaces to catch a glimpse of the splendour of their realm, startling them greatly, for they fancied we had come to frustrate their plans and cunning Court devices. What terrified cries ensued! When we saw how frightened these Achilleses and Hectors were, we waved our hats in the air. We had seen enough, and were more than pleased to have turned them into ridicule, for even our presence terrified them. But this is all a joke, although it might serve as an allegorical picture, or a sign that these daws, nay, these harpies, tremble before God's Word, or, to put it otherwise, that the noble lords at Augsburg whimper like children and Papists. Greet George von Grumbach from me. From my solitude.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCXXIV

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther sends letters to his friend.

June 27, 1530.

Grace and peace! The messenger who appeared scarcely gave me time to write to our people in Augsburg. But he begged so for letters that we send you those received from Wittenberg. Please see that our Augsburg friends get them.

I fancy you can easily do this, as you have so much communication with that town. The exposition of the Psalm "Confitemini" is being sent to the Wittenberg printers, with an exegesis which is a disappointment to me because of its length. Meanwhile greet Dr. Spengler, Abbot Michael, Joachim, Coban Hesse, Osiander, from me. If you can procure from your good friends three-score (*Schock*) oranges for my Catherine, I shall gladly pay for them, as there are none in Wittenberg.

May you and yours prosper, and be in health. From my quiet solitude.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXXV

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

One of those remarkable letters by which Luther tried to cheer his friend.

June 27, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ ! In Christ, I say, and not in the world. Amen ! As to the *Apologia* being the cause of your silence, of that I shall speak again, dear Philip.

From the bottom of my heart I am inimical to those worrying cares which are taking the very heart out of you and gaining the upper hand. It is not the magnitude of the cause, but the weakness of our faith which is at fault ; for things were much worse in John Huss's days than in ours. And even were the gospel in as great danger now as then, is not He who has begun the good work greater than the work itself, for it is not our affair ? Why then make a martyr of yourself ? If the cause be not a righteous one, then let us repudiate it ; but if it be, why make God a liar in not believing His wonderful promises, when He commands us to be of good cheer and cast all our care upon Him, for He shall sustain us ? "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him," etc. Do you think He throws such words to the winds ? It is your philosophy, not your theology, which is such a torment to you, and it torments your friend Joachim in the very same way, just as if by your useless forebodings you could achieve anything. What more can the devil do than slay us ? I plead with you, for God's sake, to fight against yourself, for you are your own greatest enemy, and furnish the devil with weapons against yourself.

Christ has died for sin once for all, but for righteousness and truth He will not die, but will live and reign. Why then worry, seeing He is at the helm ? He who has been our Father will also be the Father of our children.

I pray earnestly for you, but am only sorry that you should court sorrow as eagerly as the leech does blood,

thus nullifying my prayers. As for me (whether it proceed from God's Spirit or from stupidity, my Lord Jesus knows) I do not torment myself about such matters. God can raise the dead, and He can also maintain His cause, although it looks ready to fall; and He can even raise it up again if it has fallen. If we do not lend our assistance towards its maintenance, others will; and if we do not console ourselves with the promises, who then can give us consolation in the world? More of this again, although I may only be carrying water to the sea. May Christ comfort, strengthen, and teach you by His Spirit.

If I hear you are still desponding I shall scarcely be able to prevent myself hurrying to you to see how dreadful it is to be in the fangs of the devil, as the Scripture says, "Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?"

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 1062.)

CCXXVI

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther tries to cheer his friend after hearing the joyful news of the public reading of Melanchthon's *Apology*.

June 29, 1530.

Grace and peace, dear Herr Philip! I have read the beautiful speech in which you apologise for your silence, and meanwhile I have sent two letters satisfactorily explaining my not writing. To-day your letter came, full of unmerited reproaches, as if by my silence I had increased your work, danger, and tears. Do you really imagine that I am sitting in a garden of roses and not sharing your cares? Would to God that I could indulge in tears. Had your letters not come the evening they did, I would have sent a messenger at my own expense to find out whether you were dead or alive. Herr Veit can testify to this. I have received your *Apology*, and wonder at your asking how far one may yield to the Papists. For my part I think too much has been conceded. If they do not accept it, what more can we do?

I ponder this business night and day, looking at it from all sides, searching the Scriptures, and the longer I contemplate it the more I am convinced of the sure

foundation on which our teaching rests, and therefore am becoming more courageous, so that, if God will, not a word shall be withdrawn, come what may. I am pretty well, for I fancy through all your prayers the spirit which has been tormenting me is beginning to give way, but I feel very languid.

We might arrive at great honour if we only denied Christ, but "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

I am not pleased that you say you have followed me, as you regarded me as the principal adviser in this matter. I will not be regarded as such.

Is not this business yours as much as mine? And I shall allow no one to lay the responsibility on me, but if it be mine alone I shall act for myself.

I tried to comfort you in my last letter. God grant it may be a life-giving epistle, and not a dead letter. What more can I do? You are torturing yourself over the issue of the event because you cannot comprehend it; but if you could comprehend it I would not like to be a partner in the concern, much less its author.

For God has placed it in a spot which is not to be found in your rhetoric nor your philosophy. This spot is called faith, and includes all one does not see or understand, and whoever tries to understand all this receives tribulation and tears as his reward, as you know.

The Lord has said "He would dwell in the thick darkness," and "He made darkness His secret place." Whoever wishes something different can try to find it. Had Moses waited till he understood how Israel could elude Pharaoh's armies, they might have been in Egypt still.

May God so increase your faith that the devil and the whole world may be powerless against you. Let us comfort ourselves with the faith of others if we have none ourselves. For some have faith, else there would be no Church on earth; and Christ would have ceased to dwell with us. For if we are not the Church, or a part of it, where is it? Are the Dukes of Bavaria, or the Pope, or the Sultan the Church? If *we* have not God's Word,

who then has it? I pray without ceasing that Christ may be with you. Amen!

After sealing this I find I have not answered your question very fully as to how much should be conceded to the adversary. But you do not say definitely what they expect from us.

I am as ready as ever to grant them everything if they only leave us a free gospel, but I cannot give up the gospel. What else can I say?

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXXVII

TO THE ELECTORAL PRINCE JOHN FREDERICK

Luther inspires him with courage.

June 30, 1530.

To the Serene High-born Prince, Herr Johannes Friedrich, Duke of Saxony. Grace and peace in Christ, most gracious Lord! Your Grace sees with his own eyes what kind of lord the devil is, who leads captive through his wily ways so many great people. Although I know that your Highness is well armed (thank God) against his wicked devices, yet I, in my anxiety for you, write humbly to beg you not to worry over the wicked onslaughts of your nearest blood relations. For when the devil is powerless to do more, he makes the heart heavy through our friends' persecution.

The 37th Psalm is an excellent medicine against such trials. It exposes the malice of Satan's emissaries, who unceasingly try to provoke us to an impatient word, act, or gesture, so that thereby he may accuse us of disobedience and rebellion. But it is written, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And we must put up with the knavery of wicked people and "overcome evil with good."

No doubt the Emperor is a pious man and worthy of all honour, but what can one man do against so many devils if God do not give him His powerful help? I am sorry that your Highness's blood relations behave so disgracefully; but I must have patience, else I would be wishing all manner of evil. How much worse then must it be for your Grace? But for God's and the dear

Emperor's sake be patient, and pray for the miserable creatures who have not yet conquered. If I err in saying your Grace has suffered through your friends' malice, it is a great joy to me, and you will forgive me, as I said it out of the goodness of my heart, for as I sit here I think "so-and-so will feel this," and make him unhappy, "and another that," for I attribute all wickedness to the devil. I commit your Princely Highness to God. Amen. Given at Coburg. Your Princely Highness's devoted servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXXVIII

TO THE ABBOT FRIEDRICH OF NÜRNBERG

In 1525 Friedrich made over his cloister possessions to the poor. Learned men often dedicated their books to him, as Luther did his commentary of the 118th Psalm.

July 1, 1530.

To the esteemed Herr Friedrich, Abbot at St. Ilgen, Nürnberg. Grace and peace in Christ our Lord and Saviour! Dear sir and patron, I wish to show my gratitude for your love and favour to me, but as the world goes I am only a poor beggar. And although I had much I would scarcely presume to send anything to such as you. So having searched my possessions, which are my riches, I have selected my dear psalm, the lovely Confitemini, and have committed my thoughts on it to paper as I sit idle in my desert, because at times I must rest my head and stop my great work of putting the prophets into German, which I hope to finish shortly. I present and dedicate these thoughts to you, for I have nothing better. Although some may consider it a useless medley, I know there is nothing evil in it, for it is the psalm which I love. Although the Psalter and Holy Scriptures are all dear to me, being my only consolation and life, still I am specially attached to this psalm. For it has helped me out of many a sore trouble when the help of emperor, kings, learned men, saints, etc., was of no avail. And it is dearer than any riches or honour that Pope, Turk, or Emperor, or all

the world could bestow on me ; indeed, I would not exchange it for them all put together. But should any one deem it strange that I boast of this psalm being mine, which is the property of the whole world, let him know that what no one seems specially taken up with is my own. But Christ is also mine, and is still the Christ of all the saints ; and would to God the whole world would claim this psalm as I do, and then there would arise such a friendly rivalry, to which no unanimity or love could be for a moment compared. But, alas ! there are few who could say to any portion of the Bible or to a psalm, "Thou art my favourite book" or "My own dear psalm."

And it is truly sad that the Holy Scriptures are so despised, even of those whose office it is to expound them. All other things, art, books, etc., occupy people night and day ; and they never weary of the trouble, while the Scriptures are left lying as if they were of no use. And when people do them the honour of reading them, how quickly they get through them. There is no book upon earth which is so easily mastered by all as the Holy Bible. And they are really the words of life, not written for speculation, but to be acted on in life. But why complain, for no one pays any attention.

May Christ our Lord help us through His Spirit to honour His gracious word. Amen. I herewith commend myself to your prayers. From the desert.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXXIX

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

On June 25 the Augsburg Confession was publicly read by Chancellor Brück in Latin, and by Christian Beyer in German, before the Emperor, Elector John Ernest of Lüneburg, Philip of Hesse, etc. The Latin copy was handed to the Emperor with these words, "This Confession can withstand the very gates of hell."

July 6, 1530.

Grace and peace, much-loved man ! Our Horning will tell you more minutely what is taking place at Augsburg and here than I can. After coming here, Dr. Jonas

wrote telling me that our Confession, which our Philip drew up, was read by Dr. Christian Beyer before his Imperial Majesty and the Princes and Bishops of the Roman Empire in the Emperor's palace. The Elector of Saxony, Margrave George of Brandenburg, John Frederick the Younger, Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt, the towns of Nürnberg and Reütlingen, etc., all signed the Confession.

The Imperial party is now debating whether they shall answer it or not. Many bishops wish peace, and pay no attention to Eck's and his friends' proposals. One bishop said at a private gathering, "It is only the truth—we cannot deny that."

The Archbishop of Mayence is much praised for his love of peace; and Duke Henry of Brunswick said to Philip, whom he invited to dine with him in an easy way, that he could not deny the articles of the bread and wine in the sacrament, the marriage of the priests, etc. And we hear that no one at the Diet was kinder and more moderate than the Emperor, who entertained our princes sumptuously and paid them every attention. Philip writes, one cannot express the great love every one feels towards the Emperor. God grant that, as the first Emperor was the worst of Emperors, this last may be the best. Let us only go on praying. For the power of our prayers is being manifestly displayed at present. Tell Cordatus and the others this, for it is their due. The Lord be with you. Greet all friends.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 1048.)

CCXXX

TO CONRAD CORDATUS, PREACHER AT ZWICKAU

The reading of the Confession.

July 6, 1530.

Grace and peace! You have here, my dear Cordatus, a living and a dead letter, viz. Horning's and my letter to your Bishop,¹ from which you will learn all I know about

¹ Hausmann.

the Diet. Jonas was present during the two hours' reading of the Confession, and watched its effect upon the countenances of those present, the details of which he has promised to give me verbally.

The enemies tried to prevent the Emperor accepting it and having it read. Of course it was not read before the populace ; this they were determined to prevent, and did prevent ; but it was afterwards read before the Emperor and the States of the Empire. I rejoice to have lived to see the day when Christ was proclaimed by so many dear confessors, in such a distinguished assembly, through the reading of this glorious Confession, thus verifying the words of Scripture, "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings." Yes, and what follows will also be fulfilled, "and will not be ashamed." "For whosoever shall confess Me before men," says He who cannot lie, "him also will I confess before My Father which is in heaven." Of other matters you will have heard, for an account of the Emperor's grand entry into Augsburg has been printed. I see plainly that God answers prayer (Ps. lxii.). The whole world proclaims the fact. So pray on, particularly for the dear young Emperor, so loved by both God and man ; and do not forget our gracious Elector and patient cross-bearer, and our Philip, who burdens himself with all sorts of cares. If I am called, you may rely on me sending for you. The Lord be with you. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXXXI

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther thinks peace will ensue through the Diet.

July 9, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ ! We have received many letters from you, dear Jonas, and this is our sixth after our long silence. Your letters are a great pleasure to us. Things are now being put on a proper basis, and we expect a satisfactory conclusion, while the enemy dreads the opposite. There can never be entire unanimity in

doctrine. For how can one reconcile Christ and Belial? Perhaps the marriage of the priests and the Sacrament in both kinds may be left an open question, but this is after all only a "perhaps." Still, I hope that the religious question may be deferred, and meantime a world-wide peace be established. If by Christ's blessing this be achieved, then much has been accomplished at this Diet.

First, and greatest of all, Christ has been publicly proclaimed through our glorious Confession, so that the great ones of the earth cannot boast that we have fled and were afraid to confess our faith. Only I grudge you the privilege of being present at the reading of this grand Confession. For it has been my lot, even as it was that of our great warriors at Vienna last year; they had no share in defending it against the Turks, so none of the honour of the victory was theirs.

Nevertheless I am well pleased that my Vienna has been defended by others. How can we hope for good from the Emperor, as he is surrounded by numberless devils? Christ lives, and does not sit at the Emperor's, but at God's right hand, else we would have been lost long ago. Would that Philip, when his faith fails, could share this, my belief. But perhaps it is Augsburg alone which is disputing about there being a right hand of God, so that we may be forced to believe that Christ has, through the Sacramentarians, been cast down from God's right hand, and that the Papists have given another rendering of David's psalm. If this be so, we know nothing of it at Coburg. So, dear Jonas, tell me if this be the case, for then I shall seek another Christ, and compose another psalm whose every line will not mock me. But a truce to this blasphemous jesting. May you believe that Christ is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. If He have lost the title in Augsburg, He has lost it neither in heaven nor on earth. Amen. From the wilderness.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXXXII

TO LAZARUS SPENGLER

Luther explains the device on his seal.

July 1530.

Grace and peace ! Honoured dear sir and friend—As you wished to know the real meaning of my seal, I shall write my thoughts on my coat-of-arms as indicative of my theology.

The first thing is a cross, black on a red heart, to remind me that the blood of the Crucified One makes the man blessed. Whoever believes this is justified. Now, although it be a black cross and inflicts pain, it does not kill, but rather makes alive. Such a heart is placed on a white rose, to show that faith yields joy, consolation, and peace, and not the peace and joy of the world ; and that is why the rose is white and not red.

For white is the colour of the angels and the spirits. This rose should be placed on a field tinted with the hues of heaven, to signify that the joy and faith of the world to come have already begun to bloom here below, and through hope we are even now in possession of that which is only manifest to the eye of faith. And on such a field there is also a golden ring, to show that the bliss of heaven endures for ever, and that its joys and possessions are far above all earthly pleasures, even as gold is the most precious of metals. May Christ, our dear Lord, be with your spirit till it attain to this life. From the wilderness of Coburg.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXXXIII

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther admonishes him to steadfastness.

July 13, 1530.

Grace and peace ! Dear Dr. Jonas—I sit here planning and sighing for you, now that things are coming to a climax, but hope for the best. Only let us not be

timid, for that would only make them prouder. I am sure they think you will yield, if they stand by what the Emperor commands. But it is manifest that the Emperor is only reeling to and fro. So if you remain steadfast they will change their opinion. Let us insist upon them giving us back Leonhardt Kaiser and others, whom they made away with in so disgraceful a manner. Let them restore to us the many souls which were led astray through their false teaching, and return to us the possessions they deprived us of through their letters of Indulgence and other modes of deceit. Let them again bestow upon us the honour of God, which they so shamefully vilified, and the purity of the Church, which they have so soiled. But who can narrate all? I am not sorry that God has so left them to their foolish devices that they are not ashamed to bring forward such matters.

He who permitted them to do so will continue to help us. I comfort myself thus. But perhaps you consider these old news (Old German *Theiding*). May the Lord Jesus, our Life and Salvation, be with you. This is my hope. From the wilderness. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 1101.)

CCXXXIV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther expects no good from the Emperor.

July 13, 1530.

Grace and peace! I also believe, dear Spalatin, that the Emperor is a good, pious man, which you always said he was. But I have no hope of him favouring our cause, even if he would like to. For what can one man do against so many devils?

Therefore, the Lord alone must be our refuge, for He loves to comfort the desponding and help those who are forsaken of the whole world. But I wish to know what has happened since I last heard from you. For I suppose things will now be settled, and you are not only condemned, but the enemy is heaping insults and contempt upon you. For the opponents are boasting of their

triumph at Augsburg, and despise and laugh at us. "But be of good cheer," says Christ, "I have overcome the world." He who dwells in heaven will laugh at them. I am sure this will be the case. We cannot look for help unless we have been forsaken. We have assumed the office and duties of those of whom it is written, "Ye will be hated of all men for My sake," and yet we are surprised when we are subjected to such hatred.

If we are unwilling to have this promise verified in ourselves, we ought not to have taken this office upon us, or should have seen that such a prophecy never was uttered. But now it is too late to reap favour and thanks. . . . I am quite pleased that Herzog George should behave thus. God will reward him according to his actions. May the Lord comfort and strengthen you all. From the wilderness of Coburg.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 2134.)

CCXXXV

TO JOHN AGRICOLA, EISLEBEN

The Emperor was indignant at the Elector's steadfastness, and refused to confirm him in his Electorate and ratify his son's engagement to Sybylla of Cleves.

July 27, 1530.

Grace and peace! That our opponents load us with terms of reproach and are trying to get the Emperor to buckle on his armour against us is a sure sign that they feel they will be defeated. For it is an old device of Satan that when he is beaten by the truth he diverts people's attention to secondary matters, so preventing them attending to the main thing. He did this with his emissary, Eck, at Leipsic, in regard to Carlstadt, and in many other cases.

Let us therefore cleave to our cause and not yield.

Now these gaping fools, as I call them, must admit, but will not, that I exalted the authority of the Emperor and the worldly powers at the time they were vilifying them, and hurling bans at them, oppressing kingdoms and monarchs with their curse, as St. Peter prophesied.

Now their folly is manifest. But it is God who is fooling them. My Staupitz was wont to say, "When God wishes to torture any one He first shuts their eyes." I am sure their eyes are shut, for I regard them as devils incarnate.

No more senseless demand has ever been made than that everything should remain as it was and their ideas be accepted, while ours are cast aside, especially as they themselves admit that we are right in many respects. For this is tantamount to expecting that our *Apology*, which even they praised, should be disavowed by us before the whole world. Truly this manifest vengeance of God on His enemies affords me no little consolation.

May the Lord Jesus guide you through His Holy Spirit. God grant this. From the wilderness.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCXXXVI

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther's ill-health and Satan's assaults enabled him to sympathise with others in their dark hours.

July 31, 1530.

My dear brother, grace and peace in our Lord!

Although I have nothing to say, I did not wish the man who brought the game to return without letters.

I believe you have all wrestled manfully with the devil this week, and I presume this is why Weller's and Schosser's messenger has not returned from you. In spirit I am very near you. But I am sure this much-maligned Christ is even nearer. Therefore I cry earnestly to Him to stand by you. God grant you may not desert our cause. For I know the adversaries try to draw away the timid and desponding.

Do not be anxious about me, for it is no organic disease from which I suffer, so I scoff at Satan's angel who buffets me so severely. If I cannot read and write I can still meditate and pray; also sleep, play, and sing. Only do not worry unduly, Philip, over a cause which is not in

your hand, but in the hand of Him who is greater than the Prince of this world, and from whom no one can rend us, so that we may verify His Word. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, . . . to eat the bread of sorrows, for He gives it to His friends sleeping, or in sleep" (Luther's version).

Cast your care upon God, who raises the dead and heals the broken in heart. The God of all consolation, into whose hands I commit you all, has chosen us to spread abroad His honour and glory. From the castle so full of devils, but where, nevertheless, Christ reigns in the midst of His enemies. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze and
Walch, v. 16. 1067.)

CCXXXVII

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther admonishes his friend to industry at Augsburg.

August 3, 1530.

I send my nephew Cyriac to you, my excellent Jonas, to seek Hans von Irene in Augsburg. Help him to find him.

I could not permit the young man to return, when so near, without getting a glimpse of the pomp there, so that he might be able to tell about it, the Germans being so slow at writing history. P. Weller told me how much time you have at present. "Then why does he not write an exposition of the Psalm, 'Blessed are all'?" "I do not know," he said.

But what are you about? Make use of your head while you can, before you are afflicted with stone and unable to work. I too have much leisure, but my head prevents my using it. Hitherto I have overlooked your shortcomings in this respect because you write me often, for which I am most grateful. I still expect the exposition. Do not presume to leave Augsburg empty-handed.

I am busy with the 117th Psalm, "Praise the Lord, all ye nations." It will be a channel for my eloquence, as I had to stop translating the prophets. I only finished

Hosea, and for this had to seize every fragment of time and every bright moment. The difficulty of translating Ezekiel stopped me.

The attacks of Bucer and his friends please me, for, as I have said, they who dishonour the Son of God will be brought to shame. If you hear anything more of Carlstadt tell me. The Lord be with you. Amen.

From the desert, where the daws have long ago finished their diet before you had well begun your negotiations.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCXXXVIII

TO GEORGE BRÜCK,
CHANCELLOR TO THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY

Myconius said that Brück was more learned in the Scriptures than all the theological doctors, although only a lawyer.

August 5, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ! Highly esteemed lord and sir—I have written several times to you and others, as if I fancied I experienced more of God's help and consolation than was afforded to his Electoral Grace. But I was impelled to do this through the depression into which some of our friends had sunk, as if God had forgotten them. But He cannot do so unless He forget Himself first. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee." "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands."

Lately, I saw two wonders. First, as I looked out of the window I saw the stars shining in God's beautifully vaulted heavens, and yet there were no visible pillars supporting this firmament, and still the heavens fell not. Now there are always some who search for those pillars to grasp them, and, failing in their quest, they go about in fear and trembling, as if the heaven must fall because they cannot grasp the said pillars. If they could, then all would be right, they fancy.

Second, I beheld great clouds hovering over us, borne down by their great weight, like unto a mighty ocean, and yet I saw no foundation upon which they rested and no shore which bounded them, and still they did not fall, but, greeting us stiffly, fled on apace. But when they had vanished, a rainbow feebly lit up earth and sky, till it too disappeared like a mist among the clouds, making us fear as much for the foundation as for the water-charged clouds above. But in very deed this almost invisible mist supported the heavily charged clouds and protected us.

So there are some who pay more attention to, and are more afraid of the waters and the dark clouds than give heed to the tiny bow of promise. They would like to feel the fine mist, and because they cannot they fear a second flood.

I write in this jocular way to your Excellence, and yet it is no jest, for I am much pleased to hear how courageous you are, and what a deep interest you take in all that concerns us. I hoped we would have been able at least to maintain worldly peace, but God's thoughts are far above our thoughts, and this is well, for St. Paul says He hears us, and does above all we can ask for. Were He to hear us when we plead that the Emperor might grant peace, then it might redound to the Emperor's honour, and not to God's. So He Himself will procure peace, so that He alone may have the glory.

These bloody men have not done half the mischief they intended, and have not yet reached their homes.

Our rainbow is weak and faint, but we shall see who conquers. Your Excellency will pardon my garrulity, and comfort Magister Philip and the others. Christ will comfort and support our most gracious lord, to Whom be praise to all eternity. Amen. I commend your Excellency to His loving faithfulness. From the desert.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXXXIX

TO HIERONYMUS WELLER

Refutation of Augsburg Confession, read August 3. Charles insisted on the Princes agreeing with every word, for he would have no schism. Philip of Hesse responded by secretly quitting Augsburg.

August 10, 1530.

If in my forgetfulness I should repeat myself about melancholy, you will forgive me, for our temptations are common to all, and doubtless you suffer for me even as I do for you.

We are persecuted for Christ's sake, but let us honour Him by bearing each other's burdens. Do not worry over what you suffer, such a spirit being fatal to Christian joy. God has no pleasure in self-torture. So, seeing such despondency displeases Him, we should bear Satan's onslaughts patiently, trusting in God. True, it is not always easy to shake off such thoughts, but if we cast all our care upon Him they will not gain the mastery. The Lord Jesus, that unconquerable Conqueror, will help you. From my solitude. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1211.)

CCXL

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

August 14, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ, my dear Käthie!

The messenger has scarcely a second to wait, but I must send you a line. Tell Pommer and the others that I shall soon write. No news from Augsburg, but expect letters hourly. It is reported that our answer to the Refutation will be read publicly, but they refuse us a copy of it, to enable us to answer it.

If they are so afraid of the light, our people will not remain long. Since St. Lawrence's Day I have been almost well, having had no buzzing in my head, which enables me to do my writing, for till lately I was much plagued with these noises. Greet everybody and everything. More again. God be with you. Amen. Pray

confidently, for your prayers will be answered and God will help.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXLI

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

August 15, 1530.

To my dearest Käthie Luther at Wittenberg.

Grace and peace in Christ, my dear Käthie! After closing your letter, I received letters from Augsburg, so I detained the messenger to let him take them with him.

You will see things remain much the same in Augsburg as I described them lately. Let Peter Weller and Herr Pommer read them to you. May God graciously continue to help, as He has hitherto done. I can write no more at present as the messenger is impatient. Greet our dear Sack and Hans Luther, with his tutor, to whom I shall write shortly. Greet Aunt Lene, and all the rest. We are eating ripe grapes although we have had much rain this month. God be with you all. Amen. From the desert.

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—I am much annoyed at the printer's delay in sending the proofs. I wished to send away copies, so hope they will soon be ready.

(De Wette.)

CCXLII

TO FRIEDRICH, ABBOT AT NÜRNBERG

Luther sends him his dedication of the 118th Psalm.

August 22, 1530.

Most honoured and highly esteemed Abbot in Christ—I hereby send the psalm Confitemini, which has appeared with your name. It is the only way in which I can acknowledge your kindness. But I fear that having your name alongside my execrated name may draw down as much hatred upon you as association with your honoured name increases my influence. Should this be

so, I beg your forgiveness for having done it in the innocence of my heart solely to please you, and I am sure you'll forgive me with your usual amiability. They have only sent me these two copies from Wittenberg—the other I am sending to Coban Hesse; I would have liked to send copies to those excellent men—Spengler and Link. Meantime I have committed them to our flying messenger without even reading them, and have not kept one. May the Lord Jesus, our salvation, keep you till His day. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1214.)

CCXLIII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Reports from Augsburg reach Luther.

August 24, 1530.

Grace and peace! I fancy you know ere this, dear Philip, of the new commission of fourteen men at Augsburg, you and Eck being the principal, and Spalatin, the scribe, which I almost wonder at. And what is more, the Pope, after the raising of the siege of Florence, was surrounded in St. Engelsberg, Rome, by the Roman army. We poor hermits have nothing to do but write the news to you orators, who resemble the frogs on the island of Seriphos.

I enclose the treatise on the schools—a real Lutheran document, whose prolixity even its author cannot deny. It is my nature. The little book about the Keys has the same fault. God willing, I shall next write on justification. I hear the plague is in Wittenberg, the Leipsic students having brought it. Four have died, and two houses are shut up. No one except Lufft wrote me about it—not even my wife. The Captain and the young Prince Hans Ernest are still there, so you need not be anxious. The Lord, who sent you to Augsburg, make you great and glorious there! I am again troubled with hoarseness, and fear a return of my old malady, but perhaps it is only an onslaught of Satan, but if Christ conquers let Luther perish. Are Cyriac and Caspar

Müller with you? They left here three weeks ago and have never written. From the wilderness.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16, 2837.)

CCXLIV

TO COBAN HESSE

Luther sends translation of the 118th Psalm.

August 1530.

Grace and peace! I send my promised psalm, excellent Hesse, in the form into which my pen has transformed it, or deformed it. I received yours along with the letter, which I read daily. I do not expect you to be as much delighted with mine as I am with yours, although it is the same psalm. For I never would compare myself to such a poet. For you are the king of poets, and the poet of kings; or rather the royal poet, and poetical king, who makes the royal poet talk so beautifully in a strange tongue. Accept my thanks for giving me such pleasure. Out of a fat sophist I have turned into a sordid theologian; and besides this despicable store of theology I have nothing. Accept this instead of a present, and greet your queen and princes tenderly from me, also Wenzel. I shall not write him now, as last night I had such pain in a tooth that I am quite limp to-day. May the Lord guide and maintain you. From the desert.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCXLV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

The Emperor uses artifice to unite the two parties.

August 26 or 27, 1530.

I got a sight of our people's opinion concerning our affairs, but what I wrote Philip I write to you, that for Christ's honour and to please me you would believe that Campegius is a perfect devil.

I have been much upset through our opponents' propositions. As sure as I live this is a trick of

Campegius and the Pope, who first tried by threats to ruin our cause, and now by artifice. You have resisted force and withstood the Emperor's imposing entry into Augsburg! And now you must put up with the tricks of those cowed monks which the Rhine conveyed to Speyer, and their arrival is closely associated with this talk of unity of doctrine.

This is the whole secret. But He who enabled you to withstand violent measures will strengthen you to overcome feeblers. But more of this to Philip and the Elector. Be valiant and concede nothing which cannot be proved from Scripture. The Lord Jesus be with you. Amen. From my hermitage.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXLVI

TO HANS VON STERNBERG

Luther dedicates the new edition of the 117th Psalm to the caretaker at Coburg Castle.

August 27, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ our Lord! Most excellent and honourable sir and friend—I lately brought out a little book on the 117th Psalm, but did it hastily and issued it with no dedication,¹ so I have again placed it in the oven to have it better fired, that it might bring forth more fruit. For the Holy Scriptures are well worthy of being adorned and made the best of, so that they may win as many admirers as they have enemies. I wish it to go out under your name, so that it may receive more consideration from certain parties, who know that there are many excellent people among the nobility.

For the majority of the upper classes are acting so disgracefully that they are a stone of stumbling to the common man, making him fancy that all the nobility is corrupt.

And it is most disastrous that the masses should despise and lightly esteem those who bear rule in the

¹ Bloss und nackt.

world. It is certain to bear evil fruit whenever the devil has time to stir up mischief, as in the Münster disturbances and the Peasant Rising (1525).

We have the clergy's example before our eyes, who lived so securely and shamefully that they were despised of all, never dreaming they should sink into such contempt. But this has happened, and we must see that they never again are held in the same esteem. The nobility are following their example, and will inherit the lot of the clergy. To prevent such ideas taking possession of the people, it is good that those who deserve it should be praised. For God always arranges that there should be some excellent people in high positions so that He may not have made His people in vain, even should there only be one Lot in Sodom. . . . Therefore as God has endowed you with great love to His Holy Word and to all virtue, I could not refrain from lauding His grace in you (for it is God's grace and not your merits), to see if perchance your example might not move some of the reckless nobility to act worthy of their pedigree and not in such a boorish manner. It is the bounden duty of those who desire to rule in the world that they set an honourable and virtuous example to those beneath them. God demands this. I trust your heart may have as much pleasure in this and such-like little books as those who make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem have. Not that I despise such a pilgrimage, for I would gladly make the journey, and now that it is too late, I listen and read eagerly about it, as I did lately, only we have not a very high opinion of such pilgrimages.

And it might happen to me as it did at Rome, when I was such a bigot as to rush through all the churches and cloisters believing all the lies they told. I said one or two masses at Rome, and it was actually a grief to me that my father and mother still lived, so gladly would I have delivered them from purgatory through good works, masses, and prayers, etc.

There is a saying in Rome, "Blessed is the mother whose son holds a mass on the Saturday of St. John's!" How gladly would I have made my mother blessed!

But the church was so full that I could not get in, and I ate a kippered herring instead. Well, well, this we did, for we knew no better, and the Papal chair did not punish such monstrous lies. But God be praised that we have the gospels, psalms, and other sacred writings from which we may draw refreshment with profit and bliss, and visit the true promised land—the real Jerusalem—nay, the very paradise and kingdom of heaven, and not by means of the graves of the saints, but may wander at will through their hearts, thoughts, and spirits. I herewith commit you and yours to God, and forgive my garrulity, for it is a joy to me to see pious nobility, as there is such an outcry against them. God help us all. Amen.

Your obedient, MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXLVII

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

September 15, 1530.

To my beloved housewife, Katherine Luther, at Wittenberg.

Grace and peace in Christ, my dear Käthie! The messenger is so hurried that I can only write a note, but I hope to come soon myself, for we have letters from Augsburg saying matters have been discussed, and they are only waiting for the Emperor's decision.

But it is thought it will be postponed to a future council, for the Bishops of Mayence and Augsburg are so decided that the Count Palatine of Treves and Cologne will not consent to dissension or war. The others are indignant and try to stir up the Emperor. God's will be done, if only the Diet were at an end. We have done and conceded enough. The Papists will not yield a hair-breadth, but one will come who will compel them to do so.

I wonder why Hans Weiss has not printed the psalm (117). I never thought he was so particular as to refuse a second edition, for it is a choice specimen. Send it at

once to George Rhau.¹ If the pamphlet on the Keys pleases Herr Pommer and Cruciger, let it be printed. I cannot understand who told you I was ill, when you see the books that I write. I have translated all the prophets except Ezekiel, which occupies me at present, also a treatise on the Sacrament, not to speak of letter-writing, etc. I have no time to write more. Greet all and everything. I have a lovely large sugar book for Hanschen Luther; Cyriac² brought it from Nürnberg out of the beautiful garden. I commit you to God and pray. Regarding Polner,³ act as Pommer and Weller advise. From the wilderness. MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXLVIII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

On September 14, Prince John Frederick visited Luther in Coburg Castle.

September 15, 1530.

Grace and peace! Yesterday the Electoral Prince and Graf Albrecht appeared unexpectedly on their way home. I was glad they had escaped from the turmoil, and hope that you, too, may soon be free. You have done enough. It is now time for the Lord to work, and He will do it. Only be of good cheer and trust Him. I am angry, and yet glad, that Eck and our opponents make this wicked accusation against us that in declaring the necessity of enjoying the sacrament in both kinds we are condemning the whole Church and the Emperor himself. These miserable creatures have no resource left them but to flee to the Emperor in their distress and flatter him to his face. Well, let them misuse the Emperor's name as they will, so that they may draw down upon themselves the wrath of Him who in heaven is preparing His bows and arrows against them. This is how the Turks talk, and yet we must not fancy that such a mighty people shall all be damned. Were this so, what article of our faith could

¹ Another printer.

² His nephew.

³ Another nephew.

we maintain were it dependent on the mob? But why discuss this in a letter?

Only remember, my Philip, that you are one of those who are called Lots in Sodom, whose righteous souls are vexed day and night with the filthy communications of the wicked. But what follows? The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. You have confessed Christ, you have pled for peace, you have obeyed the Emperor, been loaded with shame, and have not requited evil for evil; in short, you have conducted the sacred work devolving on you in a way becoming a saint. You have gone long enough with downcast head, and I would now bid you raise your eyes towards heaven as a true member of Christ.

I long for your return, that I may wipe the perspiration from you after this hot bath. To-day my head was very bad. The winds howling round the castle just now must have their playground in my head. The Prince gave me a gold ring, which fell from my finger, as if to show that I am not born to wear gold, upon which I said, "Thou art a worm and no man." Eck or Faber should have had it, for lead or a cord round the neck is more seemly for me. He wished to take me home with him, but I said I must wait for you.

I pray and hope you may be of good courage, and not distress yourself needlessly over the unpromising aspect of present events, nor be afraid, for you know the whole matter rests in the hands of Him who in a moment can cover the heavens with clouds, and then suddenly make the sun shine brightly, and delights so to do, into whose bosom I, poor sinner of sinners, commend you poor sinners, although I deny being a defender of sin. Greet our brethren in the Lord. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—You must not believe there is an infectious disease in Wittenberg. All goes well there, God be praised.

CCXLIX

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther defends Melanchthon against Baumgärtner and Osiander, who complained he was too yielding in the union negotiations. The Elector's lawyers would have given way for the sake of brotherly love, but the Elector was firm, saying it was not a case for Christian love.

September 20, 1530.

Grace and peace! Be angry and sin not. I have read your heavy accusation against my Philip, dear Link, and had I not learned from our people's letters from Augsburg last Saturday that they had committed our cause to the Emperor I would have been much shocked.

I trust you now know that our business bears quite a different aspect from what it did then. If it were not so, I would write sharp letters to them, which Spangenberg would forward.

But I have already let it be understood that I was not inclined to approve of such articles and conditions. I fancy they now see for themselves that these are disgraceful church-robbling conditions with which our opponents, those bold, impudent gentlemen, try to mock our weak little party. But Christ, who has permitted them to become so blinded and hardened as not to believe the gospel, is thus preparing them for the Red Sea!

They are on the brink of irremediable ruin, and must perish, for they will have it so. The Lord be with us! Therefore lay aside your wrath. Philip is still negotiating some points, but nothing is yet arranged.

But I believe Christ has used such false appearances to mock our revilers, by filling them with false joy and hope, and making them believe we would give way, and then they would conquer.

But afterwards they would see they were only being befooled. I am certain that, without my consent, theirs is useless. And even were I to consent to such godless monstrosities, the whole Church and the gospel teaching

would be against it. Pray for me, and farewell in the Lord. Greet your Eve and the children. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 16. 1541.)

CCL

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

September 20, 1530.

To the learned Philip Melanchthon, servant of the Lord.

Grace and peace in Christ! You could not credit, my Philip, what a swarm of verbal and written complaints I received after I got your letter, and very specially concerning yourself. I tell you this most unwillingly, for I am tenderly solicitous not to grieve you in the slightest, for you should receive only consolation from me, who ought to help you to bear your burden. And hitherto I have always tried to do so. But now I have our people's letters and the other party to contend with.

I defend myself thus. At first our Augsburg friends sent me very different accounts.

But I am determined rather to believe you than others, and hope you will conceal nothing pertaining to the cause from me.

For I am convinced that you will concede nothing which could injure the confession and the gospel.

But to begin with, it is not necessary to explain explicitly what the gospel and our confession really are!

But we must abide by our old agreement—to concede everything in the interests of peace which is not at variance with the gospel and our recent confession. I have no fear for the good cause, but dreaded force and cunning on your account.

Pray write, *via* Nürnberg, all that has happened since I got your last letter. For the tragic letters of our people would make us fancy that our affairs have assumed a serious aspect. The night before last some one mumbled something like this before the Prince at supper, but I said, with assumed indifference, that no one had written me about it. So I long for letters. Give me a true account to stop their mouths. They pay no attention to me.

May the Lord guide and maintain you. Amen. From
the desert. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther relates the course of negotiations since the Prince left.

September 23, 1530.

Grace and peace! As you wish to hear all that has taken place in Augsburg since the Prince's departure, dear Nicolas, I shall briefly relate everything.

You know that certain umpires have been chosen to deliberate over unity of doctrine and peace, and Herr Philip is among them. But as they could not agree they again referred the matter to the Emperor, and now await his decision, although in the last letter they said the way was being paved for an agreement.

In our former peace negotiations our opponents demanded we should permit private masses, retain both canons with the glossary, and the word sacrifice, etc., and call it an open question whether one takes the sacrament under both kinds or not, and allow the married monks to leave their wives and return to the cloister, and cease being considered married men. If we concede these, then they will tolerate the sacrament in both kinds, and acknowledge the wives for the sake of the children till a future council. You here see Satan's presumption, dear Nicolas, in making such disgraceful proposals to those whom he leads captive at his will.

But our people have not yielded, although they have offered to restore the jurisdiction to the bishops if they will permit the preaching, and do away with the abuses and some of the fast days. But nothing has yet been done. As I write, letters have come from the dear Elector saying the Emperor permits him to leave to-day. The Emperor Charles is a Christian who seeks to establish peace and unity, but whether he may be able to do so I know not, as he is surrounded by so many masked devils (devils in disguise). Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

COBURG.

(Walch, v. 21. 1216.)

CCLII

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

September 24, 1530.

Grace and peace in Christ, my dear Kathie! I hope, by God's grace, we shall be with you in fourteen days, although I fear our cause will not remain uncondemned. Efforts are being made towards this end. They will have difficulty in forcing the monks and nuns to return to the cloister.

Still — has written; he hopes all will end peacefully in Augsburg when they disperse. It would be a mercy if God granted this, for the Turk is determined to be at us.

I herewith commit you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCLIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN

On bidding the Elector adieu at Augsburg the Emperor said: "Ohm, Ohm, I did not expect this of you!" And it was most courageous to oppose Charles V., whom twenty kingdoms obeyed.

October 3, 1530.

To the High-born Elector John. Grace and peace, most gracious Lord! I am delighted that your Electoral Highness is emerging from the Augsburg hell, and although the eye of man may be displeased with this, still we hope that God may finish the work He has begun in us, and strengthen us more and more. You are in God's hands, even as we are, and our enemies cannot hurt a hair of our heads except God wills it. I have committed the matter to the Lord, who has begun it, and will complete it, I fully believe.

It is beyond man's power to bestow such a gospel (*Lehre*), so I shall watch to see who dare defy God in these things, for "bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." They may threaten, but to carry out is not in their own power. May your Electoral Grace be strong in the spirit of joy and steadfastness. Amen.

Also, seeing I have kept house at Coburg for half a year, I must mention some drawbacks, but do not wish to burden your Grace therewith, but feel it my duty to make them known, as an order from you to the officials would be sufficient to rectify them. I heard of them through subordinates, but have seen them myself, and all details can be had from Herr von Sternberg and the keeper (*Kastner*), both of whom privately complained to me, being much distressed over it, and yet were powerless to make any change. They enumerate defects in enclosed paper,¹ and humbly plead that your Grace would issue orders which cannot be disregarded. Your Electoral Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCLIV

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther was now in Wittenberg. He preached before the Elector in Torgau on the first Sunday after his return.

October 31, 1530.

Your accusing me of not writing, most excellent Amsdorf, justifies me in retaliating upon you for your continuous silence. For although knowing how solitary I was, you did not send me a line of consolation, but heaped injury upon injury by persisting in the said silence. And now you accuse me of a neglect which is not mine, but yours.

I wonder if you have, perhaps, meanwhile become Archbishop of Magdeburg and Primate of Germany, that you have so easily forgotten poor me, and administer rebukes in such a high-handed fashion.

For I do not think you should blame me for calling him of Mainz Reverend, unless you thought you were thereby being deprived of your lawful title. For I only used the word in Court fashion, even as one says "Gracious Sirs" when perhaps speaking to raging devils. But you have given me one pleasure in expressing yourself pleased with my last publication. I could issue nothing more because of my health, and can scarcely revise it, it being

¹ Not found.

written by stealth, and much against the wish of my disease, and its progress at the printer's is as slow. More of this when you come to visit us, which I hope you will do, so that we may have delightful converse before departing this life. For I feel symptoms of approaching age. May the Lord be graciously with you in truth. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

CCLV

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Account of the Emperor's coronation at Bologna.

November 2, 1530.

Grace and peace! Our people will have told you about our Emperor, for it is a long story. But this is certain. He intends coming to Germany soon, and it is expected he will be very indignant against us if the Turk does not bring him to another way of thinking, as was the case at Vienna, where he compelled the proudest Dukes of Bavaria to write humbly to the heretical princes for help. For the Turk is only putting off his time in Hungary, being determined to return to Germany in spring.

One of our ambassadors was here, who was sent by our Princes to the Emperor, and taken captive by him. He told of the pomp with which the Pope received his Majesty at Bologna, where he has been crowned. After the Emperor had kissed the Pope's feet his Holiness said: "Your Majesty must forgive me, but I dislike having my feet kissed, but the ancient ceremonial demands this."

The Emperor then knelt, and the Pope kissed him repeatedly on the cheek, after which his whole retinue was admitted to kiss the Papal feet.

Four thousand ducats were scattered among the people. Charles honoured the Pope with a purse containing four thousand pieces of gold, with his own and his brother's likenesses. They were called presentation gulden. The canons may triumph now, for they will soon perish, while

for the disciples it is a time of sorrow. The joy will soon come to an end. Let us only pray, and the gates of hell will not prevail.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLVI

TO WENZEL LINK

Charles V. tried to get his brother Ferdinand chosen as Roman king, having bribed five Electors with large sums which he procured from the Fuggers. The Elector John summoned the Princes to a conference at Schmalkalden.

December 1, 1530.

To the esteemed Wenzel Link, preacher in Nürnberg. There are no news here, for you know more of what is taking place in Coburg than we. We hear of floods in Antwerp and Flanders. If it be true, then it is an evil omen against both their Majesties—the Papal as well as the Imperial. For these are signs through which Christ is preparing for coming to judgment. The end of the world is drawing nigh, while the reign of the saints begins to dawn. Pray that my faith may increase. In body I am pretty well, except that I am afflicted with a discharge in the teeth and neck. Greet all our people, Osiander and the Abbot Dominic, Spengler, and our Veit. For I cannot write them all. For I am not only Luther, but Pommer and Dome Provost, and Moses and Jethro, and what not! Yes, all in all! But truly the more numerous the objects which distract his attention, the less capable does he become of managing even one.

Pommer's work in Lübeck is most successful, but Satan gives him much trouble through a maiden who is possessed. The devil tries wonderful ways of attacking people, which you will find in the enclosed letters, which you can read and return. Greet your wife and child from me. My Käthie greets you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

P.S.—Pray send enclosed to Strassburg, and have it put into dear Nicolas Gerbel's hands.

CCLVII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN

Luther advises the Elector to vote for Ferdinand as Roman Emperor.

December 12, 1530.

Grace and peace, Most Serene High-born Prince, Most Gracious Lord! My dear friend Dr. Brück has, at your Grace's request, secretly asked my opinion as to the election of a Roman Emperor, as His Majesty wished your opinion on this matter. Although my mean worldly position should preclude my mixing in such high matters, about which I cannot advise, not being sufficiently acquainted with all the circumstances, still I shall communicate my thoughts to your Grace. First, I think that it is most desirable that, in the choice of a king, your Grace should, in God's name, vote, and for this reason: If you refuse to vote, then they might have a pretext for depriving you of your Electorate. On the other hand, if you do vote, then you would be confirmed in the tenure of your Electorate, and thus their cunning devices to deprive you of your lands would be frustrated, even as God defeated their wickedness at Augsburg when they fancied your Grace dared not appear, and then they would have had a pretext for condemning your Electoral Highness. So again their wiles will be foiled, and you will retain your lands with all the more glory. You may rest assured that it is no sin to choose an enemy of the gospel in a worldly sense as Emperor, as you cannot prevent it, and then your Grace must obey the King.

And again, should your Highness refuse to vote, the choice might fall on Herzog George, or such another, and then the title might descend to his heirs, and cause unending jealousy and dissension. Therefore, should your Grace, through refusing to vote, burden your conscience with so many evil consequences, it would be a great grief to me, and perhaps most offensive to God.

It would be better to vote, trusting in God, who is able to shape the future far better than we, and your Electoral

Grace can always cleave to the gospel in spite of King Ferdinand, as happened under the Emperor, and besides God can arrange the future for the benefit of those who believe in Him.

And I should not like your Grace's confidence in God, which shone so gloriously in Augsburg, to suffer injury through fear of the future, especially as we have no Scripture warrant or necessity for acting thus, and which might be our ruin.

The third reason is, were you not to vote, then the kingdom is torn asunder and Germany divided, through which war may ensue, for one party will not yield to the other unless coerced through war. God knows these are no light matters, but may He help us not to make them harder.

The future is not at man's disposal, as an old History tells us, and when God is not at the helm, things turn out very differently from what one expects. If the Pope and Emperor did not get their own way at Augsburg, henceforth they will certainly fail, as they trust their own wisdom. Only let us cleave to God, and not to an uncertain future, as they did.

The Landgrave of Hesse has caused himself to be inscribed as a citizen of Zurich, which is no cause of rejoicing to me, and if God do not prevent, a great war may ensue, in which the error of the sacrament may be defended and we be blamed, a calamity which may Christ avert. For the Swiss have not yet retracted, but maintain their error. Ah, Lord God, I am far too much of a child for these worldly affairs! I shall pray God to protect and guide you graciously, as He has hitherto done; or should anything untoward happen, that He may provide a way of escape. Amen.

Your Electoral Grace will take my unintelligible prating in good part. I speak as I understand, but desire that your Grace's conscience may be clear, for it would be my greatest trial should it run into danger. I herewith commit you to the grace of God. Your Electoral Highness's devoted

MARTIN LUTHER.

1531

In consequence of Ferdinand's election as King of Rome, and the news that Charles V. was collecting troops in Brabant, the Schmalkald league was formed by Hesse and Saxony, with the support of King Frederick of Denmark, for the protection of Protestantism.

CCLVIII

TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OF GÖTTINGEN

Luther sends them a preacher.

January 11, 1531.

To the honoured Mayor and Council of Göttingen. Grace and peace in Christ! I herewith send the preacher of whom I wrote lately, Herr Birnstiel, and although he may not be master of the Saxon tongue, still I trust he may please, as in Brunswick the North German dialect satisfies them in the pulpit. The other licentiate, Basilius, will soon follow. He cannot sell his glebe, implements, and cattle so hurriedly, hence the delay. The clergy are becoming scarce (*dünne*) here. The harvest is great and the labourers few, so they must be treated accordingly. I trust your Excellencies will find them learned and capable men. Herr Basil speaks both good Saxon and North German, so I confidently recommend them. Pray provide them with money for the journey. Meantime I bade them borrow. God grant they may bring forth much fruit, to the honour of His name and your salvation. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CCLIX

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

About the Sacramentarians (Zwinglians).

January 21, 1531.

Honoured in the Lord, grace and peace! It is hardly necessary for me to write, as Jonas, a living epistle, is starting for you. From him you can hear what is taking place here and elsewhere. The Sacramentarians

are most anxious to communicate with us, and are conceding some things and adopting a milder tone. We shall pray that the harmony may be complete. Pommer is working diligently, but Satan buffets him through a maiden who is possessed. Jonas, this Demosthenes, will enlarge upon all this with his usual eloquence. I wonder that Bernard is not back. Write him to return immediately, for the living of Sebastian-Rotteritz is waiting for him. It is near Leisling, and I think will suit him. If not, I shall seek something else. Tell him he will not eat me into the poorhouse in three or four weeks; so manage this for me. We are reissuing the German Psalter because of the enemy's aspersions. Christ, who has begun the work, will finish it, to His honour and our salvation. My wife and household greet you respectfully. Yours obediently,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1377.)

CCLX

TO JOHN GÜTEL, PREACHER IN GÖTTINGEN

Luther introduces the bearer of this letter to his future colleagues.

January 22, 1531.

Here, excellent brother, is one of the promised preachers, Hans Birnstiel; the second will follow when he has sold his farm and belongings. I beseech you, further Christ's cause, and introduce no innovations into the services, if in accordance with your views. For the common man gladly seizes any such pretext for damaging God's Word. For although such ceremonials do not promote holiness, still they arrest the attention of coarser natures. I speak chiefly of the rites connected with the mass, altars, etc., and of vestments, torches, and such-like trifles, which can be retained, if not already done away with, as in Wittenberg.

If so, restore them gradually, but let God's Word have the first place, so that no one's conscience may be offended. For they are useful for children and feeble folks, who must be considered. But you have reached

the highest degree of perfection, for love and unity reign among you. May the Lord continue this ; and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.

CCLXI

TO MARTIN BÜCKER, PREACHER IN STRASSBURG

Concerning the Lord's Supper.

January 22, 1531.

Grace and peace in Christ ! We read your confession of faith, and highly approve of it, and thank God that we are so far at least agreed that the body and blood are really in the Lord's Supper, and given as food to the soul. But why maintain that Zwingli and Œcolampadius are of the same opinion ?

If we say that Christ's body is really offered as food to the soul, and that it is no contradiction to assert He is as much offered to a Christless soul, although it cannot at once perceive it, even as the sunlight illuminates the eyes of the blind as well as of those who see, I wonder you should be loath to admit that we outwardly put the body into the mouths of the godless as well as of the pious. For admitting that all are allowed to partake of it, then it cannot be denied that the body is present in several places at once. If this opinion does not yet prevail among you, then the negotiations must be stopped, awaiting further enlightenment from God. I cannot recede from this position, and if you do not feel that this idea lies in Christ's words, then how can there be an enduring union between us unless I am willing to sow the seeds of still greater dissensions in our congregations, thus causing a split which will prevent any unanimity.

Therefore, I beseech you, let us not ratify such a false agreement, which will cause all manner of offences, but leave the matter to God, and seek meantime to maintain this understanding that both parties admit that the body of Christ is really present in the sacrament, and partaken of inwardly by believers. For were we to do more than this, your people who partake of the sacrament with us, and ours who do so with you, would necessarily receive it

in opposition to what they believe, thus betraying the faith of those who do not know of the compact, or be guilty of open sacrilege towards them who are aware of it, and whether this would be to edification or Christ-like you know yourself. So let us be satisfied with this empty union, rather than a closer one, which would end in a more tragic separation, and produce all kinds of disturbance.

Would that I could convince you of what I told you in Coburg, that I desire greatly to heal this rupture, even should it cost three lives, for unanimity is necessary for us, and our dissensions have injured the gospel, so that I believe all the gates of hell, the papacy, and the Turk, along with the world and the flesh, could not do us so much harm if we were only of one mind. Were it possible, how gladly would I give my hand towards this end !

I expected great things from the Coburg discussions, but my hopes have not yet been fulfilled. May the Lord Jesus enlighten and draw us together through a real union ! I pray for this. I commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

CCLXII

TO KATHERINE ZELL, MATTHEW ZELL'S WIFE

This letter shows Luther's relation to the Strassburg people.

January 24, 1531.

To the virtuous lady, the wife of Matthew Zell, in Strassburg. I have not yet answered your letter, my good friend, which I received some time ago, thinking it premature to discuss matters, but seeing (God be praised) that the situation is slightly altered, I now write to beg you to do everything, with your husband and others, for the maintenance of peace and unanimity (if God will). For you know that love must go before everything, except God, who is over all, even above love itself. Wherever God and His Word dwell, there love will have the upper hand next to God. Such a high concern is too much for

us to manage alone. It must be committed to God in earnest prayer, for it is God's concern, not ours. We are impotent. Pray, pray, and let Him bear the burden. I commit you to God. Remember me to your dear husband.

MARTIN LUTHER.

Luther's Letters to Women.

CCLXIII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

About the Strassburg people.

February 2, 1531.

There is nothing new, dear Nicolas, to tell you. The Strassburgers have gone over to the Swiss, and will oppose the Emperor Karl. I have been a true prophet, for I always said that the Sacramentarians were filled with a spirit of secret sedition. If God do not prevent, a new Münzer may arise among them, to their own hurt, and they will be punished because of their contempt for the gospel.

There is a rumour that the Turks are approaching, and another that Charles is returning to Spain. The Papists are quite alarmed, and yet will not search their own hearts.

England is embracing the Reformation, and the King looks at it through his fingers. The Cardinal, who was worshipped as a demigod in England, nay, over half Europe, has been condemned to lifelong captivity. In France and Spain God's Word is also looking up. The Sacramentarians hate us more than ever since the Marburg Conference, and are sorry we have not been caught in their net. Pray for me. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1238.)

CCLXIV

TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OF GÖTTINGEN

Luther announces that the two preachers refuse to come.

March 1, 1531.

To the wise Mayor and Council in Göttingen. Gracious sirs and good friends, grace and peace in

Christ ! I have had your form of church service printed, as you see. The reason for the Licentiate Basilius not coming you will gather from his letter. I do not come well out of this business in having raised the poor man's hopes, and then having to leave him sitting. My simplicity, or rather folly, is to blame for not first inquiring into all the circumstances. But it is not my first mistake, and will not be my last.

God grant that henceforth you may first be sure of your cause, and above all unanimous, before embarking on a similar proceeding. I herewith commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCLXV

TO JOHN GÜTEL, PREACHER IN GÖTTINGEN

Luther complains of the people's meanness.

March 1, 1531.

Grace and peace ! I have had your Church Service printed, dear Gütel, and wrote a preface for it, and dedicated it to the heads of your congregation. See that it bears fruit. It will fare badly with your people if they reject any more servants of the Church. I have great difficulty in finding serviceable people, for in Wittenberg the scarcity is very great.

Formerly thousands were squandered on useless creatures who were deceivers in addition ; now they will scarcely expend one hundred gulden on a pastor (*Seelsorger*). Therefore I will take nothing more to do with them. They fancy we must be proud of them, and that they cannot be wanted.

I cannot answer your inquiries as to whether one may dispense the Holy Sacrament without tonsure and priestly consecration. For if they are not in earnest there, I would prefer you to let it alone. But otherwise you should openly ordain them before the altar with prayer and the laying on of the hands of the other servants of the Word, thus empowering them to dispense the sacrament. Excuse those hasty lines. I see so much ingratitude that I am unwilling to advise or have anything

to do with those Israelites who are satiated with the manna. Remain steadfast in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLXVI

TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OF GÖTTINGEN

March 28, 1531.

Grace and peace, honoured sirs! The licentiate of whom you wrote is now beyond your reach, having been called to Goslar. As I told you, such people are scarce and precious, and will become more so, and I know of no one sufficiently versed in the Saxon tongue to suit you at present. But I have discussed it with your messenger, and he will try, with a letter from me, to arrange matters with one Cyriac at Cöthen, who till now has preached at Zerbst. If he'll accept I'll promote the call. I commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCLXVII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther mourns over the ingratitude of the Zwickau people.

May 14, 1531.

Grace and peace! I write a few lines in the greatest haste, to beg you to come here as soon as you can. You would be the most welcome of guests. Do not distress yourself over your people's ingratitude. I am glad we have this opportunity of despising them. You must not resign your living, but under the pretext of visiting me leave them in order to see the issue of events. More by word of mouth. Do not worry your neighbours through your annoyance. It is not your fault. Meanwhile, rejoice in being reviled for the truth and blamed by these ungrateful people. The Lord be with you! Greet Cordatus politely from me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLXVIII

TO HIS MOTHER

Letter of consolation in her last illness.

May 20, 1531.

Grace and peace in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Amen.

My dearly loved mother, I have heard of your illness from my brother Jacob, and am much grieved that I cannot be with you in person, but am with you in spirit, along with the others.

Although I trust your heart has for long been richly supplied with the comforts of God's Word, and with preachers and comforters, still I shall contribute my mite thereto, as is the duty of a child to his mother.

First, dear mother, you know well that your sickness is a proof of God's fatherly love, and that the uplifted rod is a small punishment compared to that with which the godless are visited, nay, even that which He brings upon many of His dear children, one beaten, the other burned, and so on, so that all must cry, "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long." Therefore, all such suffering ought to be received as a mark of God's favour, seeing it is a mere trifle compared to that of His dear Son, our Lord Jesus, which He endured for us.

And you, dear mother, know the foundation of your blessedness, Christ Jesus, the corner-stone, who will never fail us, for He is the Saviour of all who in their deep need call upon His name. He says, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And now that death and sin have been overcome, we may be full of joy, and when sin frightens us we may say, "I will not listen to thy alarms, but to my Saviour's word of consolation, 'Be of good cheer.' This is my stay; upon it I will depend. It will not deceive me." St. Paul also glories in it, defying the fear of death, exclaiming, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Occupy your heart, dear mother, solely with such thoughts, and be thankful that God has brought you to the knowledge of these things, not leaving you to trust in

your own works and regard our Saviour as a cruel judge and tyrant, from whom we must flee to Mary and the saints for the comfort He only can give. But we now know the fathomless mercy of our Heavenly Father, and that Jesus is our Mediator and Bishop, daily interceding for us in God's presence so that all who call upon Him may partake of His consolation, for He bare our sins on the tree, so we may boldly approach Him, calling Him by the sweet name of Saviour and Comforter, the true Bishop of our souls. Therefore, joyfully thank the Lord for such tokens of His grace. He who has begun the good work will graciously finish it. For we are powerless to help ourselves. We cannot conquer sin, death, and the devil by our own works, but there is One who can, and who says, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And again, "Because I live, ye shall live also; and your joy no man taketh from you." The God of all consolation grant you a firm, joyful faith, so that you may overcome this, and all other distress, and at last experience the truth of these words, "I have overcome the world." I commend you, body and soul, to His mercy. Amen. All your children pray for you, also my Kätie. Some weep, others eat and say, "The grandmother is very ill." May the grace of God be with us all. Amen. Your dear son,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCLXIX

TO CONRAD CORDATUS

Luther wishes Cordatus to visit the Eisleben living.

May 29, 1531.

Grace and peace! I am delighted with your call to Eisleben, my native town, for then you will be an antagonist of Wicelius, towards whom you have a righteous hatred. But you should first go and inquire into everything, and if you are pleased, then you need not regret leaving that terrible hole. That God's will be done is my sole desire. There you would perhaps breathe a purer atmosphere, which is cleansed by the furnaces

burning night and day, and not, as in Zwickau, inhale such damp fumes. You know the proverb, "Imagination often makes things appear real." I thank God you feel a little better. But lay aside these fancies, which have made you think you had many serious illnesses. I have often to contend with these fancied ailments also, for our adversary the devil winds himself about us, not only to devour our souls, but to martyr our bodies with tormenting thoughts. Knowing well that the health of our soul depends very much on that of the body—"a merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones"—I can talk beautifully to you, but do not follow my own counsel. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLXX

TO THE CHRISTIANS IN ZWICKAU

Letter of consolation.

June 21, 1531.

Grace and peace in Christ! I know well, God be praised, that many among you are deeply grieved that your two preachers are being so badly treated. Truly they have learned the gospel wrong when they act thus towards their pastors. But it must ever be so that God and His servants are treated thus, outwardly through tyranny, inwardly by false brethren and ungrateful people. My advice is, let the creatures muddle themselves with drink while you possess your souls in patience. They are God's enemies, and so God is their enemy, and it is punishment enough for them to have so powerful an enemy, whom they at present despise, but who will in His own time let them feel His wrath. As for you, remain true to the doctrine you have embraced, and wait on the ministrations of your faithful pastor and the sacraments till you see what the Prince will do.

Go to St. Katherine's to service and for the sacrament, or put up with the preacher in the Pfarr Kirche, as it suits. Listen to them in so far as their preaching is pure,

and partake of the sacrament without scruple, for the Word and sacrament is, and remains, a God-like thing. But do not praise or acquiesce in their shameful doings. For, seeing they are installed, it is not your place to remove them publicly from office or to avoid them till the Prince issues his decree. I commit you to God, that He may strengthen you in this and all tribulation.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCLXXI

TO MICHAEL STIEFEL

Luther announces a visit at the cherry season.

June or July.

Grace and peace! Many greetings, dear Michael. I know of nothing to write about, so, in case of burdening you, do not write, but wished to send you this greeting as a letter, and to announce that, if God will, we shall shortly pay a visit to your cherries, with a number of cherry-loving boys. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1238.)

CCLXXII

TO BERNARD VON DOLEN

Concerning the marriage of this preacher.

July 13, 1531.

Grace and peace! My Käthie greets you, dear Bernard. She orders me to write you. What you write of the carelessness of the preachers and the contempt of the peasants is only too true. Here patience is not only salutary but indispensable. I laud your resolution to marry, but see that the manse is first built, so that you may occupy it alone with your wife. For it is an insufferable thing to lodge in some one else's house with a wife. I know the maiden, Hanna Zetzschin, well, and trust she is an upright and estimable person. I also know that she has been well brought up, for she learned housekeeping

under a strict disciplinarian, and had a great deal to do and put up with. Still you must not rely on my judgment or that of any one else, but must see her for yourself in favourable surroundings. For there is nothing special in her personal appearance, it being rather ordinary, if you wish good looks. Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me. As yet we are, God be praised, all well.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1233.)

CCLXXIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN OF SAXONY

The Turks threatened war. The Emperor consented to peace negotiations being opened in Frankfort in June, but the Elector was emphatic as to purity of doctrine being maintained, which was secured by the Schmalkald league to the Protestants.

August 14, 1531.

Grace and peace, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! The learned Dr. Brück gave me your greeting, with the request that I would pray for your Electoral Grace. I humbly thank you for the greeting, and for all the unmerited favours you have showered upon me. But it is my duty to pray for your Grace, and I have always done so both in the pulpit and secretly in my closet, and shall continue to do so as long as I live, for it would be a sin if I gave it up, knowing how much you have to endure, both outwardly and inwardly, and how heavy your burden is. But the great and gracious God, who has counted you worthy to suffer so much for His Word, and to bear so many burdens connected with the State, will not forsake you, for He has said, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee," which He has hitherto so marvellously done, especially in regard to the late Diet. I shall also faithfully serve your dear son, Herzog Ernest. May Christ guard you on your proposed journey, and for ever! Amen. Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCLXXIV

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther introduces Barnes to Amsdorf.

September 4, 1531.

Grace and peace! I commend to you this Englishman, Herr Dr. Anton, my Amsdorf, for he passes your way on his journey to Lübeck. You can hear of us from him. Simon Hafritz is here, and I do not know in what nest to place this bird, for you gentlemen of the Treasury have endowed his numerous family scantily. But Luther has a broad back, and will bear this burden also. Thanks for supplying the wants of the others you sent back here. The Lord be with you, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLXXV

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther invites his afflicted friend to visit him.

October 31, 1531.

Grace and peace in Christ, who dwells above all the Zwickau disturbances! Yes, my excellent friend, the reason I have not written sooner to comfort you is as much due to the difficulty of sending letters as to the multiplicity of my concerns. I am sorry that you will not return to me, as I like so much to have you with me. Once more I plead with you to return. You would be no burden to me, but a true source of consolation and help. I shall have a room prepared for you and arrange everything. What distresses me most is the ingratitude of the Zwickau people in withholding from you what is your due after you have exhausted your means and strength in their service, which devotion they rewarded by giving you less and less every year. Christ will deliver you from them, and requite them as they deserve. And this same Lord, our hope and crown, our life and peace,

will encourage and rejoice your heart, and enable you to despise their poisonous backbiting.

It is an honour to be hated of the godless. The grace of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit be with you. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze and Walch, v. 21. 1398.)

CCLXXVI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

November 20, 1531.

Grace and peace, dearest friend! The other day I again wrote begging you to come to me, but as you have not replied I fear you have not got the letter. Therefore I once more plead with you to come at once. An empty room is waiting for you. Have no hesitation in coming, for you will be a comfort to me, and would to God you could spend your whole life with me. It would be easy to entertain you, and a good opportunity of refusing those ungrateful people their request, which otherwise could not be denied them. This Pastor Büchholz will tell you what I mean; but come speedily. Do not trouble about money. Farewell in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1399.)

CCLXXVII

TO JOHANN BUGENHAGEN, VISITOR IN LÜBECK

November 24, 1531.

Grace and peace! We expect your return as soon as your wife's health will permit. We have served the Lübeck people sufficiently, especially through you, whose absence is now becoming unbearable to us. For I am oppressed with work and often sick, and the Church's money matters suffer, as I cannot attend to them. Do you know that the devil has just sent a wolf, a Zwinglian, to your people in Brunswick? And now that Campanus is entering the fold of this wolf, I know not whether God is punishing our town's ingratitude or trying our patience to the utmost. You can write them on the subject, or speak of it to the magistrate on your way home.

I fear this spark will light a fire with many. But One has said to Christ, "Sit thou at my right hand!" and "Thou art my Son!" If He lies, then we can worship Campanus and his God. Amen. The Lord has bestowed a Martin upon me through my Kätchie. Things go well with us, except that the farmers, who are very well off this year, are causing very bad times through their greed, as a token of gratitude for the gospel, it is said, which has freed them from so much evil. Greet your Eve and Sarah in the name of me and mine.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLXXVIII

TO HANS LOESER, HEREDITARY MARSHAL OF SAXONY

Luther sends him an exposition of the 147th Psalm.

December 16, 1531.

Grace and peace, honoured dear sir and friend! When I was with you lately you did me the great honour to take me with you to the hunt to try if the dizziness and weakness in my head might not be dispelled through bodily exercise.

As I sat in the carriage I undertook a spiritual chase, and expounded the 147th Psalm (Lauda Jerusalem), which became to me the most delightful hunting-ground where the noblest game was to be found. Having brought it home and worked it up, I wished you to see it, so that I might not secretly retain, to the injury of my conscience, a possession which I acquired upon your ground. Therefore I send it to you, it being your property, and keep it entire for me. For such game is wonderfully adapted for distribution among friends, for each receives the whole, and no one is defrauded. Favour me by accepting it, for I am ready to serve your Grace. I herewith commit you to God, with your dear house vine and olive branches. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCLXXIX

TO NICOLAS GERBEL, DOCTOR OF LAWS IN STRASSBURG

No date.

I can only write a few lines, my Gerbel, because Satan's onslaughts are daily becoming worse. I shall gladly help the Count Hohenlohe with letters to Court. We are firmly convinced that Ferdinand will not make war on Hesse this year, for he is rather afraid of him, and could do nothing. All of us marvel at God's wondrous acts, and thank Him for having turned into derision the terrible threats at the Diet of Augsburg, so that we may enjoy peace, for all thought that a terrible war would break out in Germany this summer. But God is letting us see that He has the hearts of kings and all men in His hands. I commit you to God, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

1532

In this year Luther's good friend John the Steadfast passed away, and was succeeded by John Frederick. The Protestants also united with Charles V. to protect themselves against the Turks, who were happily defeated. The Reformation spread rapidly, and the Protestants were promised a council to arrange religious matters.

CCLXXX

TO MARTIN GÖRLITZ, SUPERINTENDENT IN BRUNSWICK.

January 3, 1532.

Grace and peace! I have already written to you, my Martin, that I thought of calling you elsewhere. I now do so in the name of the Lord. So set yourself free as soon as you can. You are expected at the living of Kalen near Jena, which is without a pastor at present. If this do not please you, then we shall exchange it for that of Belger, or some other. Excuse my brevity, but I have much to do. Perhaps Brunswick is unworthy of the pure word, and wishes to imitate Muhlhausen and

Zurich. God forbid. Amen. Carlstadt has succeeded Zwingli in Zurich, whom they now declare to be one of Christ's martyrs, that they may fill up the measure of their iniquities. May you prosper in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLXXXI

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther had heard with much concern of a misunderstanding among the preachers in Nürnberg.

January 3, 1532.

Grace and peace in the Lord Jesus! I have not written to you for long, my Wenzel, and, considering how much I have to do, my letters are not necessary to you. Still it was your duty, seeing you have more leisure than I, to write oftener to me. I only hope that the little rumour I have heard is not true, that there is some misunderstanding among you servants of the gospel at Nürnberg, a calamity almost sadder than any other I could hear of. Therefore I beseech you, for I know the uprightness of your heart, help me to combat this evil and to keep watch over these unruly spirits who are not satisfied with stirring up strife on earth, but would gladly shoot their fiery darts even against the saints and God's kingdom, which we are—to lead us astray. If it be Osiander who does not approve of our views of baptism, we shall have patience and not irritate him, even as he must have patience with us and not provoke us till Christ unravels this knot.

We are now seeing God's judgments for the second time—first on Munzer and now on Zwingli. I prophesied that God would not long suffer such blasphemies, calling us cannibals, blood-drinkers, and other horrible names. They have brought it upon themselves. Do you cleave to the Augsburg Confession. You do not give me any reliable information about Carlstadt, and I wonder at the story remaining so long secret and then reaching us in such a roundabout way, so that we are not certain as

to its truth. Philip says that if God does not lay hold of Carlstadt through his wondrous power and wisdom, He will never be able to do so by ordinary means, so manifold are the resources of this monstrosity. But the proverb, "He who stirs up strife will himself perish thereby," shall be verified in him. Greet Lazarus Spengler and all our people in a friendly way from me. May you and yours prosper in Christ. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLXXXII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN

The Elector John made over the cloister buildings and garden in Wittenberg to Luther in his last illness.

February 12, 1532.

Grace and peace, High-born Prince and Gracious Lord! Dr. Brück has shown me the articles which are to be arranged by the Electors of Mayence and Pfalz—in view of a treaty between the Princes and the Emperor, and I have given my opinion as to the form in which they might be accepted. Feeling certain that God has answered our prayer by granting peace, I could not refrain from presenting my humble petition to your Grace. For I fear the article about the King will give you ample cause for anxiety.

But, seeing that your virtuous opposition to his unrighteous election is known over the whole world, I would humbly beseech you, for the honour of God, to let said articles pass and not hinder peace. For even if it came to war, and that war were successful, peace must at last be concluded, and the terms after all the damage done might be much harder than now. Also, your Grace must see how firmly the towns and confederations are holding together, their magnanimity being a marvel to all; but only let the parties come into collision—then this unanimity will vanish like water—and neither citizen nor town will risk life and property for the sake of a prince. It is true if God sends human aid it is well, but to depend on this never prospers. But

now that the Emperor—the authority of God's appointing—commands that peace should be concluded, this should be regarded as if God were holding out His gracious hand to us, and we must not let Him do so in vain. It is easy for an ordinary person to look forward to war, for he has little to lose and can crawl easier out of the mire than the Prince he has perhaps drawn into it. But I am becoming too worldly wise and garrulous, but it is my anxiety for my dear sovereign Prince which prompts me.¹ However, I believe your Grace will manage better than I fear, and I shall cry earnestly to God for you, for it is He who must begin, carry on, and perfect anything good. Man's thoughts are only foolishness. Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCLXXXIII

TO HIS WIFE

From Torgau, where Luther is detained by the Elector's illness.

February 27, 1532.

To my beloved wife Katherine. God greets you in Christ. I hope if Dr. Brück gets leave for me that I shall accompany him home to-morrow or the day after. Pray God to bring us back fresh and well. I sleep six or seven hours running, and afterwards two or three. I am sure it is owing to the beer. But in the morning before I have eaten anything, I am fit for nothing, as in Wittenberg. Dr. Caspar² says that our gracious lord's foot is not mortifying further. But no prisoner on the ladder in the tower suffers as much from Hans Stockmeister as does his Grace from the surgeons. His whole body is as sound as a fish, but the devil has his foot in his grip. Pray, go on praying! For God has begun to hear us.

As Johannes³ is leaving, honour demands that I shall give him an honourable discharge. For you know how faithfully he has served us, and how humbly he has

¹ Ferdinand's election as King of Rome and administrator of the Kingdom in Charles's absence.

² Cruciger.

³ His man-servant.

behaved in accordance with the gospel, having put up with everything, so do not let him want for anything, for it would be well-pleasing to God. There is little available, but I would gladly give him ten gulden if I had them—but under five you must not let him go, for his clothing is scanty. Pray give him more if you can. The town treasury would honour itself by giving him something, seeing I kept him for the use of their churches. But as they will; let nothing be wanting on our part; look round to see where you can get anything. God will requite it; that I know. Amen. Kiss little Hans, and bid him, Lenchen, and Tante Lene pray for the dear Prince and me. I can find nothing here, although it is the Fair, for the children, so provide something, if I bring nothing special.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCLXXXIV

TO ELECTOR JOHN OF SAXONY

Luther wishes him joy on his partial recovery.

March 28, 1532.

Grace and peace, Most Serene Prince, etc. I have received your Electoral Highness's joyful letter with great delight, and thank God who has not despised our prayers, and has so graciously restored your Grace's health. We can well believe all that your Electoral Highness writes of the strange things he has experienced in this illness. But God, who is a God of life, of consolation, of health and of joy, will continue and perfect what He has begun, in opposition to the devil, who is the god of death, of mourning, and of sickness, and will compel him to stop his attacks. Amen.

We pray earnestly that your Grace shall want for nothing, either here or there, although you must eat a little wormwood and bite a sour apple. Pray take these awkward lines in good part, for my head is still in subjection to the enemy of all good and health, who at times promenades through my brains, so that I can

neither read nor write. May Christ, our consolation and joy, be with you to all eternity. Amen. Your Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCLXXXV

TO N. ZINK

Luther comforts him on his son's death.

April 22, 1532.

Grace and peace! Dear friend, you will now have heard of your son's death—who was studying here. He was seized with serious illness, and although everything was done for him, the disease got the upper hand and bore him away to our Lord Jesus. He was very dear to all of us, especially to me (for he shortened many an evening for me by singing treble in my house), and in addition he was quiet and well behaved, and a diligent student; so his death was a great grief to us, for we would gladly have retained him; but he was even dearer to God, who desired to have him. So it is only natural his fate should affect you and your dear wife, seeing it has grieved me so. Still rather thank God for giving you such an amiable pious son, upon whom all your trouble and expense were so well bestowed. But comfort yourselves with the thought of his falling asleep with such a testimony of his faith on his lips, which was a marvel to us, so that there is as little doubt that he is with God, his true father, as that the Christian religion is true. And be grateful that he like so many others did not come to an untimely end, and even had he lived, your means could have helped him to nothing higher than a profession of some kind. And now he is in the place he would not exchange for the whole world. So take comfort that he is not lost but only sent on before to be kept in everlasting bliss; therefore "we must not sorrow as those which have no hope."

Magister Veit Dietrich will comfort you with a few of the beautiful sayings he uttered before his death. But my love for the pious boy causes me to send you

these lines. I commit you to Christ, our Lord and Comforter.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCLXXXVI

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

June 23, 1532.

Grace and peace! My not writing you, dear Amsdorf, was caused by the state of my head, but in answer to your prayers it is now getting better. I am sorry to hear that you have been ill. May Christ restore and preserve you to us for long. I do not know what to hope for regarding the peace negotiations between the Emperor and us in religious matters. Our folks wrote that the Turk was advancing with an enormous army on Germany to attack Ferdinand and Charles.

The Pope is French, and he and the King of France refuse help against the Turks. Behold this money, which the Popes have been collecting from the Indulgences for so many centuries, to use against the Turks. It is said that the Emperor will appeal to the German princes for the promised help, so the Diet and peace negotiations may soon be ended. Carlstadt has gone to Friesland to seek a fresh hiding-place, having only got the post of land overseer in Switzerland of which he had more than enough here. May the Lord do what is well-pleasing in His eyes, to whom I commend you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCLXXXVII

TO THE PRINCES JOHANN AND JOACHIM OF ANHALT

Luther rejoiced in the accession of the Anhalt Princes to the Evangelical faith in 1532. He sent them Hausmann as Court preacher.

May or June 1532.

Grace and peace in the Lord, Most Serene High-born Princes and Gracious Lords. That pious man, Nicolas Hausmann, comes to your Highnesses as Court preacher.¹

¹ In Dessau.

I humbly commend him to you. He is an excellent man of the highest character, and a faithful expounder of God's Word, which he loves with his whole heart. May Christ cause him to bring forth much fruit. Amen. I do not doubt you will cherish him. I commit you to God, and if my poor prayers are of any avail, they are ever offered on your Graces' behalf. MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Walch, 21. 1242.)

CCLXXXVIII

TO SOME ONE UNKNOWN

On July 25 the Emperor and Ferdinand most unwillingly signed a religious truce, knowing it would strengthen heresy, so the Elector succeeded in having the Protestant Church recognised for the first time.

August 19, 1532.

Grace and peace, honoured friend! Herr Christoph Stroebel and Herr Nicolas Hausmann have told me how God has not only blessed you in temporal things, but what is a thousand times better, has quickened you spiritually with love for the gospel, which I am delighted to hear, and pray God to strengthen and maintain you in this gracious condition till His appearing. For these are dangerous times, owing to seditious persons, false doctrines, and teachers. These mischievous persons creep about everywhere, and Satan does the same, trying to overthrow our faith; and at all times our reason blindly struggles against the truth, annoyed that our cause rests solely in God's power and strength. I can only write a few lines now, for we are all in deep grief at the departure of the pious Prince from this vale of tears.

I commend you to the grace of God our Saviour, and beseech you to help poor Christoph Stroebel in any way you can, which Christ will requite as done to Himself, and I shall thank you when told of it.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG
(De Wette.)

CCLXXXIX

TO KING FREDERICK OF DENMARK

Luther pleads for the captive King Christian of Denmark.

September 28, 1532.

Grace and peace in Christ our Lord, who died for our sins, and rose again for our life! Your Majesty must perceive how God is the true and gracious Judge, seeing you always wished to be at peace with your cousin, King Christian, and God has ever given you the victory over him, for which you warmly thanked God, as well as used the victory in a God-fearing way; still, I am moved by the misery and the complaints of my gracious Lord, King Christian, and the fear of your proceeding against the captive, thereby damaging his faith in God, humbly to plead that your Majesty may follow Christ's example and have mercy on your captive cousin. For Christ died for His enemies, while we are only expected to show them mercy.

For had he been taken prisoner in battle, instead of after he had thrown himself upon your mercy, you would doubtless have treated him in a cousinly manner. How much more now, seeing he has resigned all and yielded himself up, like the prodigal son, to you as his father? We must all plead for mercy from God, therefore your Majesty will do a glorious service in God's sight by treating the poor prisoner graciously; and such an act will be a source of consolation to you on your deathbed and a well-spring of joy in heaven, besides bringing you honour and glory on earth. For it is a noble work when great persons act nobly in high affairs, and is an example to all the world as well as a joy to the saints in heaven, and well-pleasing to the Divine Majesty. So act thus, as a fruit of your faith and a thank-offering to God, and for the prisoner's consolation, and a delight to us all. And at last your Majesty will confess with gratitude how grieved you would have been had you done otherwise. May Christ endue your Majesty with His Spirit to act according to His good pleasure in everything. And pray

take this presumptuous letter in good part, for thus does God command us to be solicitous for others. Your Majesty's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CCXC

TO THE LEIPSIK PEOPLE, WHO WERE BANISHED FOR
THE GOSPEL

October 4, 1532.

Grace and peace in Christ! Nowhere else is peace to be found till the Lord comes and overthrows the arch-enemy of peace. Wolf Breunlein¹ has shown me your petition to Herzog George, with which I am much pleased; also, that you have lighted two torches to the devil,² for this will bring great confusion on that stubborn head. If you cannot procure a certificate of your upright walk from him, still you have achieved much, seeing both God and the world, also Herzog George's adherents, testify that you suffer all this because of him, and solely for Christ's sake, for all know that you are being persecuted because the Emperor has granted peace to the Lutherans, which is a great grief to the miserable creature. But stand fast! Christ begins to reign, and will put an end to the drama. Here no one will taunt you with being banished, or hinder your business, for our gracious Lord stands firm by the Confession (Augsburg).

Therefore, pray speak only good words to the mad-cap, and forgive nothing—even as you have so well expressed matters in the petition. If it help, good; if not, it will do no harm, but rather further your cause in God's sight, who will soon make short work with the devil and his followers. It is written, "The Lord hath respect unto the lowly, but knoweth the proud afar off." So take comfort, dear friends! He only can appreciate what is sweet who has tasted the bitter.

Before attaining to glory, the heart must suffer deeply. "Ante gloriam conteritur cor." May God the Father

¹ A Leipsic bookseller.

² Herzog George.

strengthen you through His own Spirit in Christ, and not in Herzog George. For Christ lives—Herzog George dies. This is certain, and will soon be proved. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXCI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther congratulates him on his settlement in Dessau.

November 6, 1532.

Grace and peace! I have allowed this letter to lie so long, dearest Hausmann, hoping to get it sent away any hour, but Aurelius always said he had no reliable messenger, till in my absence the ink-bottle was spilt over it, as you see. Pray forgive this. For the rest, thank Christ who permitted you to reach your destination in good health, and receive a gracious reception from the Prince. Thank him from me, not so much for the wild boar as for his love to God's Word, which is a remarkable trait in this great hero. Commend me to God in your prayers, and afterwards to this excellent Prince.

I have invited Justus Jonas, Philip, Pommer, and Cruciger to dine with me as you wished, to celebrate the birthday of St. Martin, of Martin the son, and Martin the father. Would that you, too, could be present. There is nothing new here, except that, by the Prince's command, the church visitation will begin anew, and Justus Jonas is one of those chosen. Afterwards the sequestration will be set about in earnest, and I fear it will be too stringent. May our dear Lord cause it all to turn out for good. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1400.)

CCXCII

TO JONAS VON STOCKHAUSEN

Luther counsels him how to combat his satiety of life.

November 27, 1532.

Grace and peace in Christ! Dear sir and friend—Good

friends have informed me that you are afflicted with weariness of life, and longing for death. Oh, dear friend, it is high time for you to mistrust your own thoughts, and listen to others who have overcome such temptations—nay, put your ear close to our mouths, and let our words sink into your heart, and God will comfort and strengthen you thereby. First, you know one must obey God's will, for He has given you life, and as yet does not will your death; so you must submit your thoughts to the said Divine will.

Our Lord Christ had much that was bitter in His life, but He would not lay it down without His Father's will, retaining it as long as He could, saying, "My hour is not yet come." And Elias, Jonas, and other prophets cried for death, through their sufferings, even cursing the day of their birth, and yet they were compelled to live on and put up with this weariness till their hour came.

Therefore, pluck up heart, and bid defiance to yourself, exclaiming, "My good fellow, when thou art so unwilling to live, then thou must live in spite of thyself, for God wills it so and I also. Throw your devilish thoughts into the abyss of hell, with their dying and death, for they are of no avail here, and grind your teeth together, determined to repulse those which have found refuge in your head, making you as stubborn as the worst of peasants, or a woman—nay, even harder, for they are not made of cast-iron!"

If you thus struggle against yourself, God will assuredly help, and our prayers, with those of all pious Christians, will do the rest.

I herewith commit you to our dear Lord, the only Saviour, Christ Jesus, who will retain the mastery in your heart against the devil, and cause us all to rejoice in the marvellous help accorded to you, for which we hope and pray, as He has commanded and promised. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXCIII

TO FRAU VON STOCKHAUSEN

Luther writes regarding her husband's depression of spirits.

November 27, 1532.

Grace and peace in Christ, honoured, virtuous lady ! I have written a hurried letter of consolation to your husband. The devil is your enemy, and that of your husband, because you love his enemy Christ. This is how he avenges himself on you, but Christ says, "Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

The suffering of his saints is very precious before God. In my haste I can write little now.

But beware of leaving the man a moment alone, or leaving anything in his way, in case he do himself an injury.

Solitude is sheer poison for him, and that is why the devil drives him to it.

But if he were entertained with all sorts of stories and news, perhaps even with those which might turn out to be false, or with fables about the Turks, Tartars, and such like, to make him laugh, and then immediately after quote comforting passages of Scripture to him, all this would do him no harm.

But whatever you do, see that he is not left solitary, in case he sink into meditation.

Never mind although he is angry at such conduct, look as if you were sorry, and be a little cross.

Accept these hasty lines. Christ, who causes your heartfelt sorrow, will help you as He did lately.

Only be steadfast, for you are the apple of His eye, and whoever touches it touches Him. Amen.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCXCIV

TO JOHANN BUGENHAGEN

Luther approves of his intention to republish some of Athanasius's writings, especially that upon the Trinity.

(No date.)

Grace and peace in Christ ! Your intention, most

excellent of men, to reissue some of Athanasius's writings upon the Trinity has my warm approval. Among these I enjoyed immensely that which was held before an approving judge, under Constantine the Great, viz. the disputation between Athanasius and Arius. The very thought of the delight with which I devoured it as a young monk, when it was put in my hands by my spiritual director in Erfurt, doubtless a true Christian, even beneath the accursed cowl, is to this day one of my pleasantest recollections ; and yet this was only a personal pleasure for my special benefit. But what you propose is something much greater. I behold Christ's spirit working in and through you in desiring to preserve and defend those doctrinal articles concerning the Trinity in their purity in the church of God, for whose maintenance that saintly man Athanasius did not shrink from drawing down upon himself all the demons in hell, in the world, and the whole kingdom of God.

Your resolution is therefore, most excellent Pommer, salutary and good in this depraved age, when all our articles of faith are being assailed by the emissaries of Satan, especially those on the Trinity, which certain sceptics and epicureans are beginning audaciously to scoff at ; and they are ably assisted, not only by these Italian grammarians or rhetoricians, which they think they are, but by certain Italian-German serpents, who by word of mouth and in their writing scatter broadcast the bad seed, whereby they excite the admiration of their own followers and boast of their success.

But these Devils, or Epicureans, or Sceptics, or Lucians, or whatever kind of adventurers, Italian or German, they may be, are nowhere when brought into the presence of Him who said to our servant Jesus Christ, "Thou art my Son" ; and again, "Sit thou at my right hand." Let us await the laurels these giants will carry away with them from those seemingly glorious assaults upon God. Such a gigantic war is nothing new ; an Eusebius or a Typhäus has nevertheless been overthrown once in a century, while our servant Jesus Christ has nothing else to do but overthrow these giants, and will not cease doing so till at last,

as Israel says, the seed and the root shall along with the branches be rooted up, and all the giants destroyed. We daily look for this, and pray that it may soon take place. Amen. The grace of God be with you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

1533

In this year John Frederick spent fourteen days in Wittenberg, Luther preaching daily before him. On June 18, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, and Apius of Hamburg were made doctors of theology. The Elector, with his wife Sybilla, and his brother, Herzog Franz of Luneburg, and Magnus of Mecklenburg, etc., were present at the disputation. The Englishman, Dr. Robert Barnes, and the Scot, Alesius, along with Melanchthon, took part. Dr. Jonas presided, and afterwards the Elector entertained them at the Castle.

CCXCV

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther, Melanchthon, and Cruciger had visited the Anhalt Princes in November at Wörlitz. Luther found them well versed in the Scriptures, and in his own writings, as well as in those of Zwingli and Œcolampadius. At table they conversed on the Bible.

January 2, 1533.

Grace and peace! Three times, most cherished friend, the opportunity of writing you has, much against my will, been snatched from me.

I have been overwhelmed with writing, as the books and prefaces, which will appear at this Leipsic Fair (*Messe*), will testify. Therefore I beseech you to forgive my delay. My love to you is and ever remains unchangeable, although I may not always be able to give expression to it, but I am ever at your service.

So, as I was finished with the books early this morning, I wrote the letters which had to be sent to Leipsic and Nürnberg this evening; and now that these also are despatched, I shall devote my leisure to write fully to

you, and to my gracious lord, Prince George, Primate of Magdeburg, to atone for my seeming neglect.

I wish you much joy on your restoration to health. May Christ maintain you in good health, so that you may pray for me. My last sermon at Wörlitz is printed, and I enclose it.

I fancy you have all my latest books, for I know Magister George's¹ zeal in such matters. It is said here that Christ has stricken the shrieker in Leipsic in the pulpit amid his blasphemy. A canon in Hamburg who opposed the gospel committed suicide, and a Sacramentarian plunged into a well, and while they tried to rescue him he lay down on his back in the shallow water, and was drowned. His last words resembled those of Judas, "I have led many astray, therefore I have no hope." Thus, O Lord, must thine enemies perish! Give my respects to your good and upright Prince, to whom, when I have leisure, I shall write a friendly letter. My Käthie greets you respectfully, and hopes you will pray for her.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1402, and Schütze.)

CCXCVI

TO HANS VON LÖSER

Luther asks him to be sponsor for his son.

January 29, 1533.

Most excellent honoured sir and co-sponsor—I entreat you for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ that you would humble yourself for God's sake and for that of my young son, whom God has bestowed upon me to-night through my dear Käthie, and come to my help, so that he may be translated from the old Adam to the new birth in Christ Jesus, through the holy sacrament of baptism, and thus become a member of the Christian Church, so that perhaps God may in him raise a fresh enemy of the Pope and the Turk. I wish him christened about vesper time,² so that he may not remain a heathen any longer, setting my mind at ease. Your Excellence will agree to this, and help to

¹ George Held.

² Paul died 1593 in Leipsic. He was a lawyer.

perfect the offering to the praise of God. I shall ever be ready to requite the obligation. I commit you and yours to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXCVII

TO JOACHIM, PRINCE OF ANHALT

Luther exhorts the Prince to cleave to the gospel, despite the efforts of great Princes to detach him from it.

March 28, 1533.

Grace and peace in Christ, Most Serene High-born Prince! Your Court preacher, Herr Nicolas Hausmann, has told me of your heartfelt leanings towards the gospel, and how hard it is for you to be faithful to it, not only from long habit, but on account of several powerful Princes writing to try and detach you from it.

It is no doubt true that two such things as these, old habits and the persuasion of great people, have influenced more deeply-rooted Christians than your gracious Highness is yet; but we must learn through time, if we cannot do so at once, that Christ is above all these, and that God the Father will have Him honoured over all. A council or pope may have the Holy Ghost, and through it achieve much, but Christ has no devil. So I pray God to teach your Grace this one thing, that Christ and His Word are higher, greater, and more to be relied upon than a hundred thousand fathers, councils, and popes, for the Bible classes them all under the name of sinners and lost sheep. Therefore be bold, and not fear earth's potentates, for Christ is greater than all devils, and more to be feared than Princes. I commend you to His mercy. Your Grace's obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCXCVIII

TO WOLF WIEDEMAN

Herzog George of Saxony was incensed at a letter of Luther's to his Leipsic adherents, and he asked the Burghermaster to inquire if he acknowledged it.

April 27, 1533.

To the highly respected Burghermaster of Leipsic,

my good friend. I am ready to oblige you in any way, dear sir. I have received your letter, and understand its object, and in reply to your petition I present a counter-interrogation. Who bade you write such a letter to me? Was it the clerical gentleman at Cologne, or the assassin at Dresden, or your junker, Herzog George? When you tell me this you shall receive an answer, printed and full of matter, if God will. For I am ready to serve you.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Doctor.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CCXCIX

TO FRAU JÖRGER

Frau Jörger was the first lady who gave 500 gulden to Luther for bursaries for poor students.

May 6, 1533.

Honoured, virtuous lady! Your letter concerning the 500 gulden, which should have reached Leipsic at Easter, came too late. But I have sent your petition to Martin Seldener to Nürnberg through Lazarus Spengler, begging him to promote the matter through a written document and send it to Nürnberg, although I should have preferred, as I wrote you, that you had done this yourself, which would have been your safest plan; for I saw from your letter that you wished such alms to be given direct to poor students rather than have it invested, and I hope you will continue in this mind. Never mind because a preacher is making you anxious about your son, as Herr Michael tells me, threatening him with law. Let them go to law if they will. It is no concern of yours. The law will decide between them, so do not burden your conscience with it. I herewith commit you and yours to God. Your obedient,

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CCC

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

July 23, 1533.

Grace and peace! Your M. Brisger again returns to you. Would to God that we had been able to entertain him as he deserved in Wittenberg, but as he is poor, he will have sympathy with us. There is nothing new here, for you must have seen my little book against Herzog George long ago. Kind regards to Brisger and you. Pray for me. Farewell in haste.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch.)

CCCI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

About Hausmann's health and a pamphlet.

September 24, 1533.

Your illness, dear brother, is a great grief to me. May Christ stand by you, and not only restore you to health, but enable you to bear your illness patiently. For He loves you because you are suffering for Him and proclaim His word.

Be strong, and despise him who hates you and hates Him whom you preach, Jesus Christ. By God's help, I am so occupied that I could not send you a line by Aurelius this morning. Herzog George has issued a pamphlet which certainly does honour to his talents and character. But God be thanked, who thereby lets every one get a glimpse of his foolish heart, and truly he has merited this through his constant persecution of the Word. He has now become his own accuser and judge, proclaiming himself to the world as a liar and traducer of the Word.

For our own sakes, not for his, we shall answer him in a dignified manner. Pray for us.

My Kathie, who holds you in affectionate remembrance, greets you. You must give my respectful greetings to

your noble and highly-esteemed Princes, whose reputation, through the grace of God, is daily increasing, being a sweet savour to all.

The Lord be with you. Written while your Weller is conducting the music during supper.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCH

TO ANDREAS OSIANDER

Dissensions still continue among the Nürnberg clergy, especially between Osiander and Link.

October 8, 1533.

Grace and peace in Christ! I read your former epistle, and also that to the Nürnberg magistrate, my excellent brother in Christ, as well as the letters and pamphlets of the other party, and Christ knows what a martyrdom these divisions and scandals are to me. But from what I can gather from these writings, it seems as if no one would yield. And why? If no one will admit being convinced by the other party, will you quarrel through all eternity, to the grief of all pious souls? But if it be a matter of conscience with you, then you merit forgiveness. Still, if the other side also cannot violate their convictions, then they too must be treated with forbearance. So let there be mutual forgiveness, and each bear the other's burden, according to the law of Christ, and thus the misunderstanding will be cleared away, and the question cease to be publicly discussed, and so, through time, it will die a natural death.

Meantime, cleave to your own opinions, and do not be disturbed by the continuance of public absolution in your congregation. Let the others also keep to their own opinions about absolution till time softens the feelings and the former unity is re-established, and then a decision can be arrived at without bitterness. At present, with the strong feeling, nothing good can be achieved, and these dissensions might easily cause a beam to be made out of the mote, and a great disturbance ensue, which

would rejoice Satan and his followers, and be very difficult to allay.

I fancy your common-sense and learning, my friend, could advance good reasons for so acting. Still there are points on both sides with which I am far from pleased.

We are human, and our flesh can easily lead us astray when one will not listen to the other, being filled with self-conceit. Therefore, I beseech you, through Christ, as I see no other way of ending the dispute, suppress and mutually beware of opening the vexed subject, and do not, on any account, bring it forward publicly. If you do this, which is certainly according to the mind of Christ, then He will give the desired peace.

I know that you too are aware of this, my friend, and how very near my heart it lies that the manifold gifts with which God has endowed you may be glorified. How otherwise would I have given myself so much trouble in this matter? Therefore, do not despise my candid way of speaking, my brother in the Lord, and strive to extinguish this spark, to prevent it bursting into a flame which will consume us along with you. May our comforter, Jesus Christ, direct your hearts into His love and patience!

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCIII

TO WENZEL LINK

Upon the same subject.

October 8, 1533.

Grace and peace in Christ! We shall write to your magistrate concerning the dispute about public absolution, my Wenzel, and I have also written to Osiander.

Now I beseech you and your colleagues not to shut the eyes of your brotherly compassion upon those who have such opinions, but treat them as sick persons, not turning them into ridicule, so that the tiny spark may not burst into a flame, but tactfully try to reclaim them from their errors. One must ponder well how to redeem the soul of this brother.

I could not have believed (but pray do not spread this) that this man could have had so many strange opinions, and could have strayed so far from our doctrine. But, as I say, if we irritate him further we would only cause greater offence, and fresh disturbances would ensue which it is better to avoid. If you are satisfied with our counsel, we trust that this business may, through time, quiet down, and he meantime draw nearer to us.

We lose nothing through forbearance, while, if he do not repent, he will only injure himself through his obstinacy.

May the Lord smooth all these disturbances.

I commit you to Him, my brother. Greet Dr. Thomas Venatorius, and I hope he will not be displeased because the publication of his theses has been so long delayed. We have reasons for this, waiting for this dark cloud to pass away.

MARTIN LUTHER.

Dr. Pommer and I beg you not to show this letter to any one except Spengler.

(Schütze.)

CCCIV

TO SOME ONE UNKNOWN

Luther directs a pastor how to treat despisers of the sacrament.

May 13.

We threaten those who despise the services of the sanctuary and neglect to partake of the Lord's Supper, with our Prince's wrath, and with being denounced as blasphemers of God. Then, if they do not improve, the pastors must instruct them for a month or longer, to try to make them see their error. But if found to be quite hardened, then they must be expelled from the congregation and avoided as heathen. The Holy Scripture (Titus iii. 10-11) is explicit on this point regarding the ban. If the general remedy is ineffectual, then you can write again regarding the matter.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCC V

CONCERNING DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

In Luther's course of instruction to his children and to all Evangelical Christians for 1533.

(No date.)

Erasmus

An enemy of all religions and a special opponent of Christ, a perfect example and copy of Epicureus and Lucian. I, Martin Luther, write this with my own hand to my dearest son, Johannes, and through thee to all the children of the Holy Church of Christ.

1534

In this year Luther's great work, begun on the Wartburg, was finished, and issued in six parts, under the title "Biblia, the whole Sacred Scriptures. Martin Luther. Wittenberg, 1534." The Reformation introduced into Würtemberg by Philip of Hesse, and into Pomerania through Dukes Barnim and Philip, the latter marrying John Frederick's sister.

Bugenhagen compiled Confession of Faith in Low German dialect for Pomerania, a precious relic of Reformation times.

CCC VI

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther dissuades him from going to Nürnberg.

January 3, 1534.

Grace and peace! Why complain so vehemently, my Amsdorf, about my not answering your letters, and fear you have offended me? You should rather have argued thus: "Had I erred, he would certainly have written, pointing out my mistake. His not writing proves that all was right, and there was no hurry to answer, especially as I was an ailing and worried man." This is written in the brotherly spirit of our old and tried friendship in Christ. I fear to advise as to the Provostship in Nürnberg. For I might err, and yet not err, and I dread greatly that this call would not suit the open-hearted Amsdorf, who takes the direct path to the object he has

in view, and that you might soon regret the step. But I may be wrong. Only I fear our friend might be deprived of his repose and launched into unrest and storms.

You are a clever man, and will weigh what is most conducive to your peace. On the other hand, I see that the wind has changed, and the princes and towns are most anxious to get eloquent preachers, if only to vie with and boast of to others. I am curious to hear your opinion of my pamphlet on private mass. It is said that I have offended many good and weak consciences. My Kätthie sends greetings. I commend you to Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCVII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Hausmann invited by the Prince of Anhalt to preach before him.

February 8, 1534.

Grace and peace! Magister George Held asked me, in your name, to let you know how you should preach on baptism, as the Archbishop of Mayence and his brother are to be present.

First of all, handle the doctrine in an amicable spirit, not trying to refute the opposite party, so that this God-forgotten oppressor may not fancy the sermon was intended to embitter them. And then enlarge on baptism, even as the Papists themselves would have to do, but never name them, to avoid occasion for reproach, giving a simple exposition of the subject.

The prerogatives of baptism are these. The sacred water is administered according to God's Word, and is not of man's invention—that it is a fresh covenant between God and the nations, to their everlasting salvation, and is God's work, and therefore cannot be sullied by any sin on the part of the dispenser.

That there is one baptism, which must be appropriated through faith to be efficacious, and dare not be repeated, except through a blasphemous denial of the first ceremony, cannot be denied. It must accompany us through life, adorning the walk with the fruits of faith, thus surpassing

all vows and works of any kind, even preceding obedience to parents and guardians.

It has been glorified by the appearing of the Father in the voice from heaven, of the Son in human form, and of the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove, all having been embodied in the words—"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The words, "This is my Son!" I handle thus: That the Son has been offered us by the Father, and glorified as Lord of all and Bishop of souls, in whom all is well-pleasing to Him, and without whom nothing is of any avail which we do. He alone is King, because the Son is the heir of all things. Herr George will tell you the rest. Sunday.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCVIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Petition for a house for a preacher.

March 11, 1534.

Grace and peace in Christ, Most Serene High-born Prince! Magister Leonhardt (Beier), pastor at Zwickau, has just been here, begging me to intercede with your Grace to let him have one of the priests' houses in Zwickau, which is or will soon be empty, for his wife and child, whom he cannot leave any longer behind him, as in these times it is impossible to gather anything, and one is glad to live from hand to mouth. His good friends at Court having promised to help him all they can, if I would only write for them, I gladly bear testimony, as he has grown up under me, that he is worthy of this favour. And such houses must be cleared out, so I humbly plead, if it be not burdensome to your Grace, that you would give him one of them. He is one of the most pious of the clergy. I am as sure of it as it is possible to judge. Your Electoral Grace will act in a gracious manner. May Christ strengthen and direct you. Your Grace's humble servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCIX

TO FRAU DOROTHEA JÖRGER

April 27, 1534.

Grace and peace, honoured, virtuous lady! I wish to tell you that your money has been well expended, and many poor have been assisted, so that I cannot doubt that God, who prompted you to do this, is openly showing His pleasure in your thank-offering.

I could not have believed that in this little town and university there were so many talented and pious youths who, year in and year out, lived on bread and water, enduring frost and cold, so that they might study the Holy Scriptures. To many of these your bursaries have been a great boon. I have already given away the half, and received receipts for the money, and proofs that it has been bestowed on honest fellows. I gave Andres the most, first ten gulden, then another ten; and the others, two, three, and four gulden, and all are delighted and grateful. May Christ be with you and yours! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCX

TO JOACHIM, PRINCE OF ANHALT

Luther wishes the Prince a speedy recovery from his depression.

June 18, 1534.

Grace and peace in the Lord, in addition to consolation and strength of body from Christ Jesus our Saviour, most gracious lord! As Magister Hausmann is again returning to your Grace, I send a line with him, although I might have nothing to write except good evening. For I hope betterness will soon set in, although it is long in coming. I still repeat my poor paternoster, but always think, having myself been so weak and help having been sent, and often more than I have asked for, that with you it will be the same.

Of course I speak of spiritual consolation, for no

earthly comfort is of any avail unless it promote this, as David says in the 57th Psalm, "Awake up, my glory ; awake, psaltery and harp." And all the saints made themselves joyful with psalms and violin-playing. Therefore, I rejoice that Herr Nicolas Hausmann comes to you now, for he will gladden your heart with Christian converse, singing, and cheerful intercourse. I pray for your Grace's salvation and happiness, and that they may tend to the restoration of your health and the overthrow of the tempter. Amen. I shall also come myself, although I lie down and die by the way, when I can tear myself free from the fangs of the printers. I commit your Grace to God. Amen.

(De Wette.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCXI

TO KATHERINE LUTHER

Luther visited the Elector, from whom he got a warm welcome at Torgau. They talked of many lands and times, till they should reach the better land.

July 29, 1534.

Grace and peace, dear Käthie ! I do not know what to write you, for Herr Philip and the others are returning home. I must remain longer here on account of the pious Prince.

You must wonder how long I am likely to stay, or rather how long you will get quit of me. I fancy Franciscus will set me free, even as I have set him free, but not so speedily. Yesterday I had to take a nasty drink, and I do not like what is not good. I keep thinking what good wine and beer I have at home, as well as a beautiful wife, or shall I say lord ? And you would do well to send me over my whole cellar of wine and a bottle of thy beer, or else I shall not be back before the new beer is ready. I herewith commit you to God along with our young folks and all the servants. Amen.

Thy loving

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Torgau.)

CCCXII

TO WOLFGANG SIEBERGER, LUTHER'S WEAK-MINDED
SERVANT

Complaint of the birds in the Wittenberg wood to Luther.

(No date.)

To our good and kind Dr. Martin Luther, preacher in Wittenberg. We thrushes, blackbirds, linnets, gold-finches, along with other well-disposed birds who are spending the summer at Wittenberg, desire to let you know that we are told on good authority that your servant, Wolfgang Sieberger, out of the great hatred he bears to us, has bought some old rotten nets to set up a fowling-ground for finches, and not only for our dear friends and finches, but in order to deprive us of the liberty of flying in the air and picking up grains of corn, and also to make an attempt upon our lives, although we have not deserved such a punishment at his hands.

Thus we poor birds humbly beseech you to prevent him carrying out his intentions, or if that be impossible, compel him to scatter corn for us in the evening, and forbid him rising before eight in the morning to visit the fowling-ground, and by doing this we shall ever be grateful to you, as it will enable us to take the route through Wittenberg. But if he continue his wicked attacks upon our lives, then we shall pray God to restrain him, and supply him with frogs, locusts, and snails instead of us, and visit him with mice, lice, fleas, and bugs in the nights, so that nothing may interfere with our freedom of flight.

Why does he not vent his wrath on the sparrows, magpies, crows, mice, and rats which inflict so much injury on man, stealing the corn from the barns, which we never do, for we only pick up little fragments and single grains of corn, which we requite a hundredfold by swallowing flies, gnats, and other insects?

We put our case before you in a common-sense way, to see if we are not cruelly treated in having so many snares laid for us.

But we trust God will allow us to escape from his foul rotten nets this autumn. Given in our celestial retreat among the trees under our common seal and signature.

“Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? ”

CCCXIII

TO LANDGRAVE PHILIP OF HESSE

Luther expresses himself willing to yield in relation to the doctrine of sacrament.

October 17, 1534.

Grace and peace, Most Serene Prince ! I have received your letter, begging that I should take the doctrine of the sacrament into Christian consideration, so that an enduring concord might ensue between us and the Swiss. Now your Grace knows how anxious I have always been for unity, having been much tried by such dissension, knowing how injurious it is to Christ's kingdom, and that the Pope would have been humbled long ago had your Grace managed to carry through the much-desired negotiations with Bucer and his friends. And even yet I am ready to concede all that I can with a clear conscience, but I fancy that even among the foreign (Swiss) preachers there are few who adhere to Bucer, and both parties will perhaps later decry both one and the other.

Nothing could be dearer to my heart than an enduring concord, but if its foundation be brittle and precarious, then peace is at an end. Pray do not withhold any counsel your Grace can give. If I can do anything against the murderers and bloodhounds, the Papists, who always boast that they have overcome the Christians, nothing shall be wanting in my poor prayers, efforts, speech, and pen. May Christ our Lord strengthen your Highness to do His will in His holy Church, to the

discomfiture and wrath of the Papists. Amen. Amen!
Your Serene Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXIV

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Letter of congratulation.

November 17, 1534.

To my brother, Herr N. Hausmann, grace and peace!
We are almost beside ourselves with joy at God's goodness in bestowing a son and heir upon the best of princes.

Pray give him our warmest congratulations, and assure him that we pray that God, who has given him this blessing, may perfect it to His honour and for the welfare of the land. God grant this. There is nothing new in regard to the new king in Münster and his apostles, whom he sent to Susat, of whom eight have been beheaded.

In North Germany there seems a movement against the Imperial ban, which the Supreme Court is about to declare against the Zwinglian towns.

I trust they are not aiming at us. Christ reigns and cares for us. Amen. I commit you to Him, and pray for me too. Tuesday after St. Martin's Day.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCXV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther wishes to discuss peace proposals with the Zwinglians.

December 16, 1534.

Grace and peace to you, dear Jonas, but death to your stone, through the power of Christ. I am most anxious to have a talk with you and others before Herr Philip sets out, only you cannot come to me, nor I to you. What I draw up to-morrow shall be written down, and I shall retain a copy to show you and the others. For in this I shall not act alone, although I fear no agreement can be arrived at between them and us.

Philip also says he will not take up this work on his own responsibility. It is too great for even two or three of our most prominent men to accomplish, so it seems as if our Philip's journey would be fruitless. I stick to my conviction even should the globe burst about my head. Therefore come to me as soon as you can. I commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCXVI

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther announces the birth of a daughter.

December 17, 1534.

I wish you happiness, my Jonas, on your ailment having left you, and I hope it may never return. Amen. I must inform you that at twelve o'clock to-day my third daughter was born.

Prince Joachim of Anhalt was to be sponsor, but the weather may prevent his coming. I wish you could be at the feast, if your health permit. Magister George will have informed you of my opinion, which I communicated to Philip. The more I ponder upon it, the greater is my distrust of this very doubtful union, for they are so divided among themselves. They wrote me that the Herzog of Würtemberg thinks so highly of Schnepf¹ and Blaurer. If this be so, what can be expected from this part of North Germany?

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCXVII

TO PRINCE JOACHIM OF ANHALT

Luther retains his Roman Catholic views on baptism.

December 17, 1534.

Grace and peace, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! The Almighty God has just bestowed a daughter on me through my dear Käthie. Now, as your Grace promised to stand sponsor on this occasion,

¹ Schnepf and Blaurer, two Reformed theologians of Würtemberg, who had leanings towards Luther's views of the sacrament.

I plead that for Christ's sake you would not disdain performing the Christian office of helping the poor little heathen out of her sinful state by nature into the most blessed new birth, thus becoming her spiritual father through the sacred waters of baptism.

And the weather being so cold, I should like to spare you the risk, if you could send some one instead from Dessau or elsewhere.

M. Philip and M. Franciscus are not at home. Your Grace knows how to perform your good pleasure. God will requite the service. I should like the baptism to take place to-morrow. May God be with your Grace! Your gracious Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXVIII

TO EBERHARDT BRISGER

A house was offered to Luther for purchase.

December 20, 1534.

What shall I write to you about the selling of your house, my Eberhardt? For you know that in such transactions I am a very novice, and you have many around you who can advise you much better than I, not to speak of yourself, who know so much of such matters.

I can only say that I shall not as yet reply to your offer, although I do not wish to boast of my poverty, but cannot refrain from saying that it would be impossible for me to bring together even the half of that sum.

I make a great appearance with the treasures entrusted to me, but I should not like you or any one else to be in my place (*Haut*). Therefore you will not find a purchaser in me, even if you offered it a hundred times. But I would suggest Bruno to you, and if my opinion has any weight, I would like you to sell it to him for four hundred and forty gulden, which I hear is the valuation.

Why should you wish to drive such a hard bargain with your good brother, seeing the Lord has blessed you with this bit of property, a fact you should remember in

all your dealings? The Lord can requite you if you believe He was and is your Creator according to the flesh. Why worry needlessly about your children's future? Christ, who has ever cared for us, will provide abundantly for those who trust Him. Doubtless I have many cares for those belonging to me, as I have much less than you, but I am aware that my cares are fruitless. Therefore I commit them to Him who has hitherto supplied my wants so abundantly, and will continue so to do if I be worthy of it, or take those away for whom I worry so needlessly, if He do not see fit to provide for them. May the Lord teach you that all our anxiety will neither increase nor lessen the necessities of life! MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCXIX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

The Torgau people wished to have their excellent preachers dismissed, under the pretext that they were not heard in church.

December 1534.

Grace and peace! We learn from your letter to Jonas, my excellent Spalatin, that they are pressing you and the other superintendents to remove the pastors in Torgau because their voices are too weak to fill the churches. This is not the first time we have heard this old song, especially as they hear Wolfgang Fuss when he preaches. But do not let yourself be talked over, my Spalatin, into making such a doubtful alteration solely because of the single recommendation of voice, which would offend many.

For if we once began to permit the people to dismiss their pastors whenever they felt inclined, how long would we retain our pastors? Take yourself, for example. Would you allow yourself to be set aside merely on account of your voice or health? Gabriel and the other clergy in Torgau possess so many other good qualities that they not only cast Magister Wolfgang's voice into the shade, but eclipse his other properties.

Therefore pray spare us this trial, which we feel would

deeply insult us. It would not be easy anywhere to find such superior men as those in Torgau, and it would be a disgrace to us, merely because of their weak voices, to exchange such excellence for what is so much worse, especially when they do so much good by their faithful teaching and reading of the Scriptures. The others through their loud tones tickle the ears of the mob, but really do less good, or only benefit themselves. The Lord be with you, my Spalatin. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

1535

The Conference at Cassel took place in January between Melancthon and Bucer, etc. The Pope sent his legate, Vergerius, to confer with Luther about a Council. Thirteen years later Vergerius became Protestant, gave up his bishopric, and took refuge with Herzog Christopher of Würtemberg, where he circulated the Bible. In December the Elector John Frederick renewed the treaty with the Evangelical Princes at Schmalkalden for ten years, even England and France sending their representatives.

CCCXX

TO A COMPOSER

January 18, 1535.

Grace and peace in Christ! Certainly, my dear, good friend, I have been slow in thanking you for the song you sent and the Vorsdorf apples. But Hieronymus is my witness how often I intended writing, but could get no one to take a letter. Therefore I beg you to forgive me, for I know you wish me well from your heart, and I feel the same towards you, although it is not always easy to express it. We sing as well as we can at table, and continue afterwards. If we make some mistakes it is not our fault, but that of our skill, which is still very limited, even after going over the air three or four times. But Virgil sings we are not all alike, and we would rather sing it correctly than incorrectly. And even if composers make it first-class, our ideas transcend even that, so we hope you will not take offence if we do our best. My

Käthie trusts you will not take this joking amiss, and she sends you kindly greetings. I herewith commend you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXXI

TO JOHANN LONICER, DILIGENT SERVANT OF THE LORD
IN MARBURG

Luther begs him not to be impatient to have a change of abode.

February 8, 1535.

Grace and peace ! I see all your motives, my Lonicer, but I cannot approve of your being overcome of the first or even second onslaught of Satan, making you desire a change of residence.

Satan cannot be vanquished through any such change, for he is a spirit which roams everywhere ; still, if you were to get a call soon you would be justified in leaving. Our Junkers are almost all, if not enemies, at least open despisers of the Word and its servants, and Christ has suffered it thus far, but when He appears in the full glory of His power they will have to atone for this. I know of nothing new except that there are rumours of a future council at which religious matters will be settled.

What may be arranged God only knows, to whom I commend you, with your house vine and olive branches.

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—This youth Emmer, the bearer of these lines, is house tutor to Dr. Jonas's sons, and wishes to become acquainted with other celebrated men on his journey.

CCCXXII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther begs him to find another place for a certain Ströbel.

February 24, 1535.

Grace and peace in Christ, dear Spalatin ! You are a good, kind man ; therefore I beseech you to find a good

post for Christopher Ströbel when you can. He is an excellent man, as you know, and cannot live in the swamps here without injury to his health, being used to mountain air. Neither our meats nor drinks suit him, and we must not be angry with him on this account, for who knows how long any of us may be spared in Wittenberg with such strange meat and drink? With you the air is better, and you live nearer the birds in the heavens, whereas we are too near the fish of the sea, or rather the abysses of the earth; hence we have worse food. I wish I could help Herr Hausmann from such a low-lying place to better air, for it is not good that his declining years should be spent amid the smells which abound in this place. So do help me. Greet your wife and olive branches from me, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1265.)

CCCXXIII

TO HIERONYMUS WELLER'S SISTER

Concerning the Sacrament.

March 7, 1535.

The grace of God and peace of Christ, honoured and virtuous lady! Your brother has told me how earnestly you desire to enjoy the much-prized sacrament of the Lord's Supper in both kinds, and wish to know if it may be privately partaken of in your own house. And although this was usual in the Papacy, I cannot advise it for the sake of the example to others. For through time every one might so take advantage of the permission, that at length the churches would be empty, instead of being the meeting-place of all, where they make a public profession of their faith. But if you are set upon it, and like to risk it, your conscience approving, then do it in God's name, to whom I commit you with my poor prayers.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXXIV

TO AUGUSTINE HIMMEL

Luther begs for a small house for his servant.

April 5, 1535.

Grace and peace! You may have heard, my good Himmel, that our Serene Prince, who hitherto divided the allowance between Dr. Andreas and my Wolf, has, of his own free will, bestowed it solely on the latter. I hope it has been officially signed by your Court official. If not, we shall send you a fully attested copy of the Prince's decree, with his seal. Therefore, pray lift the whole pension, as you have always done, and send it to him here. My Wolf will be most grateful to you, and send a little acknowledgment, so that you may not watch over Christ's grave unrequited. I should like a little house to be bought for my good Wolf, into which he might retire after my death, as he has a weak arm, and needs a roof of his own, so that he may not have to seek refuge in an institution, poor and forsaken. It is not necessary for me to urge you, as you know the man. May you and yours prosper. Pray that I may have a happy transit out of this world. My strength is failing.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCXXV

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther tries to dissuade his friend from coming to Wittenberg.

April 25, 1535.

Grace and peace in Christ! Your letter, dearest, did not depress me so much as you expected, especially as I saw from it that, although Christ was letting you be led into temptation, He had not forsaken you. I am grieved to hear that the old tragedy is beginning anew, but if you would only believe that this misunderstanding is not caused so much by you as through the tattling of a third party, incited by Satan, you would easily be enabled to set aside the annoyance thus caused.

Perhaps Christ is punishing us for our sluggishness in this way for not besieging Him with our prayers. Truly He never slumbers, even when we sink into deep sleep. You cannot think how much we have to endure from the insolence and intrigues of the Junkers and rabble, so that I am sure that were you here you would have more to endure from the many than you have there from the calumnies of a single man. I am certain that the Papacy is the devil's kingdom, which God in His anger has sent upon the world; and what kingdom could be more in unison with the world, for the world wills to have the devil for its god? Once it seemed to be the duty of the Bishops to suppress this tyranny, but the means used were too violent. For in humbling this abomination the Christian Church would speedily have been extinguished. Now this fury is again raising her head, but there is no lack of courageous men who could take those tyrants captive in the very chains they have forged around the Popes. Only I do not wander in the counsel of these people, but cleave to those who fear God, for our kingdom is above.

I write this to you to show how my heart beats in unison with yours, and to beg you not to leave your congregation. Think of St. Paul's words to Titus: "For this cause left I thee in Crete," to proclaim the Word to God's elect and elsewhere, all for the sake of the elect. Let this be your aim. You are a servant of God's chosen ones, and the target of the reprobate. If we only could render good service to the elect and the least of Christ's servants! Oh that you could endure to the end, dear Wenzel! And although there is no man on God's earth I would rather have near me than you, not only because of our old brotherly friendship, but because I ever found in you a comforter, a man full of faith in God, whom I would like to have by my side in my dying hour, still I would rather sacrifice myself than see your congregation suffer. Who knows what advantages God is preparing for you through this trial? Let us only pray and arm ourselves in patience. You ask our Prince's opinion of your proposal. What if I came, or rather fled, to you?

He is the best of Princes ; but excepting him, there is no one who would not suspect me. From this you may see what a zeal there is for God's Word in the world. Meantime sing this psalm, "Wait upon the Lord." Ah, it cannot be otherwise ! We must elbow our way through glory and shame, through reproach and error, through evil and good, through—and ever through—devils and angels, to that only One who alone is good. Therefore I beseech you, dear brother, listen to no one, but commune solely with *Him* alone. All others, although they may be the best of men, have more sense of justice than endurance. For we are all human, and the flesh combats the spirit on the battle-ground. But if it gets the length of defying you to your face, and openly showing their hatred to you, then it will be time to think of other remedies. God help us ! How strong God permits the devil to be, and us so weak ! Do not be offended with me, and consider that God is perhaps proving us, and that it is not perhaps a blessed thing to trust in man, even if he be a prince, while it is shameful for a Christian to fear men. May Christ, our life, salvation, and glory, be with you and all belonging to us. God grant it. Sunday cantate.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCXXVI

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Fear of the plague drove the University staff to Jena.

July 9, 1535.

Grace and peace in Christ, with my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord ! Dr. Brück has shown me your Electoral Highness's gracious request, occasioned by the flight of so many here, who are in mortal dread of death, and I humbly thank you for your solicitude and offer, of which I shall gladly avail myself when necessary. But my weather-cock, on whom I implicitly rely, is the overseer (*Landvogt*) Hans Metsch, who has a marvellous hawk's nose for the pestilence, and would smell it even were it hidden five ells below ground.

Doubtless a house or two is infected, but the atmosphere is not yet poisoned. For since Tuesday there has neither been a corpse nor a sick person. But as the dog-days are at hand and the young boys are frightened, I have allowed them to go out walking, to tranquillise their minds till we see how things turn out. But I notice that the young folks like to hear this outcry about the pestilence, for some are tired of sitting on the hard benches; some think they get cramp from the books, while others declare scurvy is secreted among the pens and paper. And there are those who devour their mothers' letters, which makes them home-sick and long for the fatherland, and perhaps there are many more weaknesses than I am able to recount. If parents and guardians do not try to stem the tide of these evils, perhaps we shall not be able to get pastors and schoolmasters, till at length swine and dogs will be the best animals remaining to us, towards which end the Papists are steadily working. But may Christ our Lord endue your Electoral Grace, as He has hitherto done, along with the Christian authorities, with grace and mercy, to His honour and the annoyance of Satan, so that you may know what stringent remedies to apply to this sickness. Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

P.S.—I humbly beg your Grace not to forget my poor Hieronymus Weller.

CCCXXVII

TO THE CLERGY IN AUGSBURG

The Augsburg people sent an embassy to Wittenberg to prove their desire for unanimity in the matter of the sacrament.

July 20, 1535.

Grace and peace in Christ! I would like you to learn with what pleasure I received your letter, dear brethren, from the living letters, viz. your Dr. Gereon Seiler and Caspar Huber, rather than from these dead letters, for nothing has been a greater joy to me in the course of

the Reformation than to see an end of the lamentable division, and at length to hope for an entire agreement. Herr Gereon tells me, and your letter forces me to believe this, so that my wound, viz. my distrust, is so far healed that not even a scar remains. Therefore I beseech you, through Christ, who has begun such a work in you, to persevere in this fruit of the Spirit. Doubtless you will manifest such heartfelt Christian love towards us, which shall be responded to on our part with true love and fidelity, and lay nothing upon us which we cannot joyfully accept. When this concord is ratified, I shall sing with tears, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace!" For I shall leave peace to the Church, God's house, and the punishment of the devil, etc. May Christ perfect this work among you, so that my joy may be full, and I may look forward, after so many crosses, to a joyful dying hour. Amen. Pray for me, as I pray for you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCXXVIII

TO THE ELECTOR ALBRECHT, ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE

The Elector threatened Ludwig Rabe for having spoken at Luther's table of the unjust fate of Hans Schanz.

July 31, 1535.

Repentance and forgiveness of sins, Most High-born Prince and gracious Lord! I address this letter to you, not in the hope that anything advantageous will come of it, but to relieve my conscience before God and the world, in case my silence should be construed into acquiescence of the injustice perpetrated. Ludwig Rabe allowed me to read the letter in which your Grace threatens and forbids him again speaking of the glorified Hans Schanz. As he is my boarder and sits at my table, I can testify, and doubtless your Highness is also aware, that this is not true, so I can only conclude that your Grace is stabbing me through a fence, being angry at what good people hear talked of; for I can testify that Ludwig Rabe sits at my table like a maiden, and often speaks more good of his

fine Archbishop than I can take in, and does not run about the town, but sits quietly in his room. Besides, the whole town was ringing with Schanz's misfortune before Ludwig and I heard of it, and we could hardly credit that Hans Schanz should be hanged in such a shameful manner by his dearest lord. Neither Ludwig nor I invented this tale, and the Cardinal's name was held up to execration without our aid. As it is now thought that the accusation is aimed at me, I now beg of you to leave my table and house guest unmolested, for I shall rather believe what honest people say of Schanz than listen to what your gracious or ungracious Highness (it is all one) should assert. For I do not sit here at your Grace's will that I should shut the mouths and punish the lies of those who speak well of Hans Schanz and evil of his Cardinal, and I trust your Grace will not hurry me off so swiftly to the gallows as you did Hans! I shall always express my opinion freely, and repeat any gossip I may hear of your Grace to good friends, even as I am compelled to put up with your Grace's conduct towards me. For although I do not believe what is said of Hans Schanz and in favour of his Cardinal (although as yet I have heard nothing of the kind), still I shall be pardoned for such sins without any indulgences from your Grace. And should your Grace hang all those who not only in this but in other things speak spitefully of your Grace, there would not be rope enough in Germany to do it, not to speak of many who would not so easily permit themselves to be hanged, and thus some would needs remain unchanged by the doughty Cardinal; and even the hanging of many would not suppress the outcry. And I believe (and no cardinal hangman shall forbid this, for thoughts are not taxable) that had Hans Schanz been tried outside Halle he would have remained unchanged, which is the general opinion. Perhaps they may still sing this song where your Grace has not the power to hang the people. I further believe that had Ludwig been seized in Halle, as you tried to seize him in Leipsic, he would have been hanged long ago, and then he would have had to be silent about Hans. Should your Electoral Grace wish to know

how long such an outcry has existed in German lands against you, I must inform you it began about fifteen years ago, dating from the indulgences, and all against so holy a man. If you wish to get rid of this evil reputation forbid the outcry in other places besides Halle, especially that regarding the Pope's ban, which finds little favour with the merchants, and these seldom allude to Hans Schanz's business. For being forcibly prevented speaking of him at Halle does not injure his cause, but the Cardinal's conduct does, even as the cry of Magister George Winkler's blood (of which I wrote your Grace) becomes, with time, the longer, the louder, and I believe it will never be stilled till it is avenged. This is the last letter which I shall write to your Grace, even as the Prophet Elijah wrote to King Jehoram to justify himself, for I look for no improvement, even as little as did Elijah from his Jehoram.

I must console myself with the thought that your august Holiness cannot hang every one who wishes you evil (although it would be possible to hang all who wish you well), but permit our Lord God to let the ring hang on the doors of His Church, and allow some to live, till the real tormentor (*Henker*) attacks yourself. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER,
Prcacher at Wittenberg.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

CCCXXIX

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther begs the Elector to allow Melanchthon to go to France, whither the King invited him, and other matters regarding his absence.

August 17, 1535.

Grace and peace with my paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! I most respectfully beg of you, in God's name, to allow Philip to go to France. I am moved to make this request because of the pitiful appeal I have received from some honoured and pious people who have narrowly escaped the flames, and it was Philip who, with infinite trouble, induced

the King to make an end of the butchery and burning. Therefore, if these people are deprived of their consolation, then the bloodhounds may begin their bloody work afresh, so I do not see how Herr Philip can, with a clear conscience, desert them in their deep need, and rob them of their much-needed consolation, especially as it might make the King and those about him very mistrustful of all of us, for he has graciously written himself requesting Philip's presence, besides sending a messenger. Your princely Grace will, by the grace of God, permit Philip to leave for three months. Who knows what God may mean to do, whose thoughts are at all times higher and better than ours! For my part, I should be very sorry were so many pious hearts deprived of the comfort for which they so touchingly and so confidently cry and wait. And one could not wonder if they and many others thought badly of us. Therefore I plead once more that your Electoral Grace would most graciously grant Philip's request. We pray daily to God for your Electoral Highness, and by our diligent labour try to promote your cause. May God lead and strengthen your Highness by His Holy Spirit to do His good and gracious will! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

cccxix

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther contradicts the report of epidemic in Wittenberg.

August 19, 1535.

Grace and peace! I wish you joy on your recovery, my excellent Jonas. The report of an infectious disease here is most unfounded. But Heaven seems to will it that the devil should succeed in separating us at least bodily, and who knows by what means. Philip has been called to France by the King, and he would gladly have gone, but the Elector would not permit it. He then went off in rather a bad humour to Jena. We had a small gathering of doctors on the Feast of the Holy Cross, and a

disputation on the preceding Saturday. We received a stag at my request from our gracious Prince. Bugenhagen was laid hold of on his way home, and you also will soon come, and the whole Jena University, if it can be called the Jena High School, which is really that of Wittenberg. Our town is quite desolate, but we are in good health and spirits, except for one thing—the beer is finished all over the town. It is well for me that I have still some in my cellar. The other citizens have none. What is being brewed is new, and is being consumed warm from the pans, so the brewers who can are forced to brew. My Käthie greets you and yours. My boy Hans Luther would have answered your Justus, but having scented the old Jonas in the letter, he could not, on account of the press of writing, answer through the elder Luther. But he will write ere long, as well as his years permit. Once more farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

P.S.—I would gladly assist Bernard, but cannot with my own means, God having laid the duty upon me of providing for a numerous family, and, besides, I have many debts. I cannot help wondering why so strong a man, with such a healthy wife, should be in such deep poverty, and an alms here and there is of little avail, and to help with alms people who could earn something becomes impossible at length. Give me a hint how I may help them, for I would gladly do anything for the good man, seeing he is a guest in the Church of the Gentiles and a member of the Jewish Church. I commend you to God.

CCCCXXI

TO JUSTUS JONAS

On September 14, Hieronymus Weller, who had been called to Freiberg, and Nicolas Medlar, chaplain to the Electress of Brandenburg, then living in Wittenberg, were made doctors of divinity. Jocular invitation to banquet.

September 4, 1535.

Grace and peace! I hope you have received the letters and disputations, with the directions, sent from a very

incompetent person, to teach you what to say at the ceremony of conferring doctors' degrees; and now our head cook, Käthie, begs you will, with this thaler, send us birds and what you can find in your region of the air, which creatures God has appointed for man's use. But send us no ravens, but sparrows in any number, and if you lay out any more it shall be refunded to you; and if you can get a hare, or shoot anything for nothing, or purchase some vegetables, then send these also, for the principal thing is that you all get something to eat, for one must not depend on beer alone, of which my Käthie has brewed fourteen tuns, in which she has put thirty-two bushels of malt to suit my taste. She hopes it may be good; you will judge for yourself when you taste it. There is no other news, except that the Emperor is carrying everything before him in Africa. But Herzog George and the Bishop of Halle have issued an order to their people to fast three days a week for the Emperor and receive the sacrament in one kind, so that things may improve even more. So if the Emperor Karl should conquer Constantinople, which God grant he may, then it will be these things and not God who has done it. But Christ lives, so let us rejoice even amid the rage of devils and men, enjoying the good things of life, till they come to a miserable end, especially if you confer your delightful society upon us, with your captives, who, under the sway of the head cook, will be consigned to the captivity of the pot. My Käthie and all greet you respectfully.

Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1430.)

CCCCXXII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHERS

Request for a private audience for the Englishman Barnes, etc.

September 12, 1535.

Grace and peace with our poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! His

Majesty the King of England's messenger, Dr. Antonius, has begged me to request your Grace to grant him a private interview, for he does not wish his business to be known till he knows how he stands. As your Electoral Highness knows the man, and we believe he brings good tidings, we humbly pray that he may have a hearing. And besides, he has managed matters very well in regard to M. Philip's promise to the King, and has achieved much in making the King so anxious to have him, and so unwilling that he should go to France ; and also in sending such a stately escort, with such a hostage, for a guarantee. So we beg your Grace, if not before, then immediately after your journey to Austria, to receive him. Who knows what God, whose wisdom is higher and His will better than ours, may achieve. So if M. Philip, who is invited in such a splendid manner, cannot fulfil his promise, it will be a great grief to him, especially as he has always been overburdened with work, melancholy, and temptations, and needs no additional sorrow. Your Electoral Grace will know how to act in a gracious manner. Christ our Lord be with you to all eternity. Amen. Your Electoral Grace's humble

MARTIN LUTHER,
JUSTUS JONAS,
CASPAR CRUCIGER,
JOHN POMMER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXXXIII

TO FRAU JÖRGER

Concerning an Evangelical service in her house.

September 12, 1535.

Grace and peace in Christ with my poor paternoster, honoured and dear lady ! I have seen Herr Andres, and received your letter, and thank you for your present, especially the small groschen, which I would like to know if it were good, for it looks so new it might be counterfeit. Herr Andres also tells me that you are anxious to know

if you might, with a good conscience, have preaching in your house (as your pastor has no objections), solely for your own people, and no outsiders belonging to the church.

If your pastor permit it, then you may have it till it is forbidden you, for you are not expected to please every one, although eventually you may be compelled to give way to the powers that be. Each one in things like these takes the responsibility upon himself. And do not mind although the preacher may not have been consecrated by a bishop, for it is not to the office of preacher he is set apart, but rather to the practice of private mass, and such priests are Baals and Jeroboams. Whoever is called is consecrated, and may preach to those who have called him ; that is our Lord's consecration and ordination, and is a right honourable one. My housewife sends her kind regards to you all.

I commit you to God. Amen. At Wittenberg,
Sunday. MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXXXIV

TO GEREON SEILER, DOCTOR OF MEDICINE IN AUGSBURG

Luther wrote seven letters on this day, although very weak at this time.

October 5, 1535.

Grace and peace in Christ ! Your letter, my excellent Herr Doctor, was a great joy to me, not only for itself, but because so many dear travellers accompanied it, whom I received as emissaries of good tidings of peace and salvation with every respect and delight. Christ, who laid the foundation of this unanimity, will perfect His work. Amen. At your request I communicate to all the brethren, with every expression of esteem, my heart-felt satisfaction at the renewed efforts for union. You can discuss my proposal for meeting together with your party, and communicate your decision to me, so that I may let the Prince and all our people know.

Herr Melancthon has, for many weighty reasons, given up his proposed journey to France. For we have

been informed of the faithlessness of the French from many distinguished men. But I am sorry for this people who groan under so hard a yoke. Would that I could give them the help for which they plead. Perhaps if they fled they might find a home elsewhere. May Christ have mercy on them, and deliver them, and afflict those who oppress them. Amen. I commend myself to you, my most esteemed Herr Doctor in the Lord, who, I pray, may guide and maintain you and yours to all eternity.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

CCCCXXV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Various topics.

October 28, 1535.

Grace and peace in Christ! Eight days ago Dr. Christian Baume departed this life. M. Philip writes that he caught fever on a journey, and the phlegm descended from the head to the chest. I enclose M. Philip's letter. Brück is not in Prague, Philip declares. As yet we hear nothing of the Austrian journey. Last Sabbath the plague carried away Schadewald, the best citizen in the town, but since that all is quiet. I have catarrh, at times accompanied by a cough. Many students have returned. I have no other news. I should like to know where the Pope's Ambassador is, for there seems to be a mystery in regard to the whole council. Greet your flesh and blood from me, and pray for me. I am at present occupied with Simon and Judas, and the preparation of the thesis against secret mass; further, with 1 Cor. chap. 13, and also with some other passages where the doctrine of justification is to be found. My Käthie, who rides, drives, sows her fields, buys cattle, and turns them out on the meadows, and brews, sends you her kind regards. Over and above, she has a bet of fifty florins that she will read the whole Bible by Easter. So she is in earnest. She has begun the fifth Book of Moses.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXVI

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther's interview with the Papal legate Vergerius.

November 10, 1535.

Grace and peace ! I thank you for the hare and the birds, my dearest Jonas. I had much to write about, but I am very tired, and the topics are too numerous even to touch upon with my arrears of work. The Papal legate once more appeared among us in Wittenberg. He is now with the Margrave. One would fancy the man flies rather than rides. He invited Bugenhagen and me to breakfast, because the day before I had forbidden the sacrament (*Nachtmahl*) in the bath. I ate with him in the castle, but as to the conversation, no human soul could repeat it. All through the repast I was not only Luther, but represented the Englishman Barnes, whom he also invited, but such language as he used towards you ! But more by word of mouth.

The Frankfort people write me complaining that the Archbishop of Mayence purposes forcing mass and the other Papal rites upon them. How necessary is it for me to have you all here ! Instead I must act alone, decide everything, and all because of the plague, at which the devil laughs heartily, being delighted that he has succeeded in scattering us all solely because of a few deaths.

But God will defend and uphold His word. I herewith send you the letter of Herr Augustine, pastor at Colditz, from which you can catch a glimpse of this very fine Epicurean sect, but can also perceive that God knows how to revenge contempt of His name. You need have no doubt that our Prince has arrived safe in Prague. Melanchthon has written thrice that Dr. Brück is in Jena. Perhaps it is Bleikardt who accompanied the Prince, and it is only a mistake in the name. For as Brück had been ill, Bleikardt went instead of him on this journey. My Käthie greets you and yours. She is going on steadily

with her Bible reading. But all the disturbance with that woman robbed her of eight days' time.

Concerning your proposed transaction about the linen, she says you can easily guess what she would do in such a critical case, especially when she was so anxious to go on with her reading, and yet so afraid of losing this chance. My greetings to all your family. St. Martin's evening.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

1536

The English Embassy sent by Henry VIII. still lingered in Wittenberg, and in May Bucer, Capito, Myconius, etc., also arrived, and the disputes concerning the sacrament were happily arranged, preachers of the one communion being accepted by the other, and both parties partook of the Lord's Supper together. On June 2 the Pope issued a Bull summoning a council for the following year, for the furtherance of peace, by extirpating heresy. Charles sent his Vice-Chancellor Held to Schmalkalden to gain over the Protestants, but he did not succeed.

CCCXXXVII

TO VEIT DIETRICH, PREACHER IN NÜRNBERG

Congratulations upon his marriage.

January 14, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ! We rejoice greatly, my Dietrich, over the welcome news of your marriage, and wish you much happiness. And yet not too much, so that should your bliss exceed the ordinary lot of husbands, you may not turn St. Paul into a liar, who snarls at us happy and complacent married men, and taunts us with the words, "Such shall have trouble in the flesh." If this should happen, and you find St. Paul has been nearer the truth than you desire, then show yourself to be a man who can bear with the faults of a wife, giving honour unto the wife, as St. Peter commands. Rather keep the little queen in a good humour than be always looking for righteous cause of anger against her. Still, you must not let yourself be treated any way. But why should I choose

such an inopportune moment as that of the burning time of first love to instruct you, especially as I know you could guide a hundred women, among whom your wife is only first novitiate! I wish you even more heartily happiness to your new call to your church post. I pray you not to depart from the form of doctrine which you imbibed here in no sparing quantities. I impressed upon Dr. Hieronymus Weller to tell you not to be overcome by that national weakness called self-conceit in German, although it may sometimes tickle you. You know how we have been worried by those who were afflicted with it and deserted us. Therefore, greet your wife from me, and say she must exert herself with all her heart to prevent you succumbing to that dangerous and fascinating rival called self-pleasing. She must come first, and be the receptacle of your love. You understand what I wish.

My wife wishes you much joy in your wedded life as well as in your new post. Pray for us.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCXXXVIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther thanks him for his present. Discussion with English envoys.

January 25, 1536.

To the Serene High-born Prince, John Frederick, Elector of Saxony. Grace and peace in Christ and my poor paternoster! The castellan at Schwenitz has told me of your Electoral Highness's present of six eimers of wine, for which accept my most humble thanks, as well as for the wild boar, although I am most unwilling to be burdensome to your Grace, who has already enough to do in giving and in bearing the burdens of others.

I hoped to get rid of the English Embassy in three days, but they have no intention of leaving for a long time.

I have far more weighty matters to deal with, and have often done as much in four weeks, whereas they have quarrelled for twelve years over this single point, and they

will never, in accordance with their present attitude, either advance or retreat unless God wills it. And as the expense is too great for your Grace to bear alone, as they themselves admit, they are anxious to support themselves. Your Grace will know in this case also what is best.

And I would respectfully inform your Highness that the Strassburg and Augsburg people have appealed to me to fix a time for us to hold the consultation. I wished first to consult your Grace as to the answer I shall give them, for this "Concord" cannot be concluded till we have discussed it thoroughly among ourselves; and they write that many wish to come, among whom would be some quarrelsome people, who would spoil all; so I respectfully beg you to fix a place for the gathering, for they are willing to go anywhere except to Coburg and its vicinity, where they would have to submit to the foreign rule of the bishops; otherwise, no spot in Hesse or in your Grace's lands would be too remote for them.

I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen.
Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXXIX

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther writes of Herzog Philip of Pomerania's marriage at Torgau to the Elector's sister.

March 11, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ, beloved brother! I highly commend to you the bearer of this letter, who hopes to get a school with you, and wished me to recommend him. I am the more willing to do this as he has a testimonial from Count Hoya in Westphalia addressed to me, to remove suspicion. So if you require any such person, do your utmost for him. There is nothing new here except that I purpose publishing a pamphlet against the crocodile in Halle. I wrote to him, calling him the dragon and the devil's cardinal. Pray that Christ, who has begun to pour out judgment upon him, may finish the work,

especially as he will not cease persecuting those who at length shall attain to the grace of God.

I can tell you nothing about the wedding at Torgau except that it went off splendidly.

I gave the bride and bridegroom to each other in the evening, and in the morning Dr. Pommer pronounced the blessing upon them (as I was seized with giddiness and could not). Everything was done as is prescribed in the Catechism, for the Prince wished it so. This royal bridegroom is a fine accomplished young man, most temperate and modest, so that I am charmed with his appearance, manners, and behaviour. May Christ maintain and bestow every blessing upon him, to the furtherance of all that is good in him. Amen. My Käthie greets you respectfully. Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCXL

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther asks for German songs. Jocular letter.

March 20, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ, dear Wenzel! As it is some hundreds of years since I either spoke or wrote Latin, I almost fear I have forgotten what I knew, and probably you are in the same condition; so I hope such fears will justify any mistakes I make, without any good or evil works, for you are a gracious lord towards such offenders, even as you desire similar sins to be leniently treated by your friends.

I had nothing to write about, but did not wish Frau Detzelin with her daughter to leave without letters.

I should have liked to send some mountains of gold, but in late years our Elbe has overflowed and taken all the gold sand with it, leaving only gravel and sand behind, some of which has got a lodgment in Justus Jonas's body. I must always joke whether sick or well, weak or strong, a sinner and yet justified, well-nigh dead and yet alive in Christ. As you are seated amid gold and silver streams,

send me not poetical dreams but songs, which will give me great pleasure. You understand.

I wish to talk German, my gracious Herr Wenzel, if it be not too difficult or too tiresome, too high flown or too deep. I beg of you to ask a boy to collect all German pictures, rhymes, songs, books, etc., which have been painted, composed, and printed by your German poets and printers this year, for I have a reason for asking this. We can make Latin books here ourselves, but we are busy learning to write German books, which we hope to make so good that every one shall be pleased with them. Farewell in Christ. Pray for me. The Lord be with you and yours. Greet all our people.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCXLI

LUTHER WRITES TO HIS HONOURED BROTHER IN
CHRIST, MARTIN BÜCKER

Concerning the Congress.

March 25, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ! I must write shortly to you, dear Herr Brother, because for fourteen days I have been prostrate with a dreadful cough, and have hardly begun to recover. As to our *Congress*, this is our opinion.

Our Elector has chosen Eisenach as the place of meeting, being close to Hesse. Julius Menius is superintendent there. The fourth Sabbath after Easter seems to me the most convenient. Discuss it with your friends and let me know. Were the third or any other more convenient for you, we have no objections. Only let Brentius, Schnepf, and any one else you wish to have, hear through you.

I shall inform Osiander and the other Nürnberg people, but leave you to inform the South Germans. May you prosper in Christ; pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 19. 2526.)

CCCXLI

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther was tired of the discussions with the English. In March, Henry VIII. replied to the Schmalkalden document, saying he could only agree to it if the Augsburg Confession and the *Apologia* were toned down. John Frederick replied that if he would not admit pure doctrine into his kingdom, it was no use concluding a treaty with him.

March 28, 1536.

Grace and peace, Most Serene Lord! We have received your Grace's directions in regard to the English, and will give the articles of agreement to the Vice-Chancellor, Franciscus, from which you may see how far we have got. But as they do not know if their King may be pleased with them, especially the last four, we have first announced the matter to him, leaving a loop-hole for escape. If His Majesty accept the conditions, the alliance shall be ratified, for the articles harmonise with our teaching, and afterwards, if desired, an embassy may be sent to explain things more fully to the King.

But if His Majesty will not accept, or wishes alterations in these articles, then we cannot for his sake launch our Church into fresh trouble when we have scarcely got it into smooth waters.

Your Electoral Highness can from all this draw your own conclusions as to the royal marriage question, or say if it would not be as well for us to defend ourselves in as far as we have approved of it.

In Herzog George's affair our people have acted most imprudently, which has incensed me greatly. But your Grace has a good conscience, having offered to drop all enmity; God will not forget it. But this quarrelsome, revengeful man continues bloodthirsty and longs for murder, so that one day "his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate."

But the best of it is, he cannot even join in prayer with those who cleave to him, for he does not need prayer, so proud is he; while, God be praised, we can pray, for

we seek peace and forgiveness, which God will grant if we humbly confess our sins and seek His glory. May our dear Lord strengthen your Electoral Highness's heart against the devil's threats and sour looks. Your Electoral Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

P.S.—Dr. Caspar Cruciger begs me to ask your Electoral Highness graciously to grant him the use of Schloss Eulenburg for his marriage, as he knows of no other place to celebrate it, as it cannot be at Leipsic or Wittenberg. Your Electoral Grace will know how to act graciously. For one must help in such matters.

CCCXLIII

TO VICE-CHANCELLOR BURKHARDT

About agreement with the English.

April 20, 1536.

My opinion is, dear Herr Chancellor, that as my lord wishes to know how far we may give way to the English King regarding those articles, that we cannot concede more. If they wish to have the articles expressed in other language I do not object, but I shall permit no alterations in the matter of faith and teaching, otherwise we might rather have seen eye to eye with Pope and Emperor at Augsburg, and even now it would be disgraceful to concede more to the King than we would do to Emperor and Pope. No doubt people should have patience, for in England things connected with doctrine cannot so speedily be put into practice; still, the principal articles must not be changed or given up. The ceremonials are temporary things, which will arrange themselves through time with the help of sensible rulers, so it is useless disputing or worrying over them till the right foundation is laid. But if the alliance with the King is to be entered into, although the King does not agree with us as to all the articles, then I shall leave it to the dear lords, along with my gracious lord, for it is a worldly matter; still I consider it to be a

great danger to unite outwardly where the people are not of one mind. But I do not wish my opinion to stand in the way, for God knows how to turn the thoughts of the pious as well as of the enemy and of all men to good account when He desires to be gracious.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXLIV

TO THE MARGRAVE GEORGE OF BRANDENBURG

As Luther was too weak to go to Eisenach, Capito, Bucer, and Myconius went to Wittenberg, May 21. Myconius relates that Luther preached on Ascension Day, "Go ye into all the world and preach," etc.—a glorious sermon. On the 25th the form of the *Concord* was signed by all in the lodging of Christian Goldschmied's widow, and on Sabbath, 28th, Bucer, Capito, etc., partook of the Sacrament with the Wittenberg people.

May 29, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! I have received two gracious communications from your Grace. The first, informing me that God had called away your gracious father, Count Frederick, was very pleasing to me; for I saw in what high honour you held him, seeing you announced it to so insignificant a person as myself, for it was known how highly you esteemed your illustrious father in his lifetime.

The other, asking about the students studying here, many of whom your Grace supports, I can only say things are going on well, the loitering about the streets and the noise at nights not being, God be praised, so bad as of yore. But your Electoral Grace may depend on me letting you know if any one distinguishes himself in this way, and sending him home, as I have done more than once. But I often am not told of things done in secret, although they are diligently spread abroad. Your Electoral Grace will be kept informed of all that is taking place here concerning the Sacrament, by the princes, lords, and preachers who have anything to do with the matter, for

without such knowledge nothing can be satisfactorily concluded. But they have already given way thus far that they will faithfully maintain and teach our Confession and Apology. Still, we have discussed article by article with them, so that no danger may lurk in corners and we may have a proper *Concord*. We shall send all this to your Grace, for as you are at one with us as to the Confession, therefore you will desire all the others to be present, or wish them to know how such a *Concord* is concluded. You will do your utmost with the preachers, so that old matters may not be raked up, thus scaring the timid away. I consider they are in earnest, and if not, the accepted apology will be their punishment. It is of no importance whether they condemn the Papal processions and ciborium, which we too have not retained. I commend you to God, and will shortly write again. Your Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXLV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

June 10, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ ! This K. Zimmermann, who has either been banished or fled, begs us to find a situation for him. But as poor people come here from all quarters, there is no vacant post, so he has begged for an introduction to you. I hereby warmly commend him, as he is a native of Altenburg. We have nothing new to relate, except that a terrible tragedy has taken place in England. About your Asmodi (house-devil) I shall write as soon as I can. Meantime may Christ enable you to bear with her patiently. Greet your dear wife, and tell her we think most kindly of her, and hope she will bear the motherly or rather step-motherly reproofs patiently. Things will be sure to come right at last ; and those who have calumniated her will be covered with confusion. May you prosper in Christ with all who belong to you. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1272.)

CCCXLVI

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther wishes him to leave Dessau.

September 20, 1536.

To the learned Doctor Nicolas Hausmann, servant of Christ at Dessau.

Grace and peace, dearest brother in Christ ! Only a few words, for you always know what is going on here, as news reaches your court sooner than we get them. The two Margraves have fallen away from the gospel.

If you did not know this, now you are aware of it ; and I know not what evil thing may be smouldering among us. I am still of the same mind regarding you. I purpose inviting you to become an inmate of my house, so that you may have some rest and quiet. Your brother has promised to maintain you in my house, for I see it is impossible for you to remain where you are. Dr. Hieronymus Weller is very happy, having left to occupy his own house close by. This is a great pleasure to me.

The Emperor has not been so fortunate as we expected. It is said the famine has deprived him of five thousand officers—brave men—such as the Margrave Frederick, Caspar von Fronsberg, and I know not who else. The Council seems to me only a sham, although I hear Herzog George is writing a book against the Bishops.

Our Alesius writes from England that the new Queen, Jane, is an enemy of the gospel, and will shortly be crowned. Things appear now quite different in that kingdom, so that Antonius is obliged to remain hidden and keep silence. The King continues to despise the Pope ; and it has been determined, with the consent of this whole kingdom, that no one shall start for the Diet till the King consents to it being held, which will never take place.

So long as the King is against it, the Diet is a myth, or at least it will not be held at the appointed time ; and when that has once gone by, who will vouch for

another time being fixed? The world is full of knavery. Farewell in Christ, and pray for me, my brother; I need it greatly. Greet your noble Prince from me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1536.)

CCCXLVII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther complains of want of benevolence.

September 24, 1536.

To the highly esteemed George Spalatin, shepherd and Bishop of the Church at Altenburg, my beloved in the Lord. Grace and peace in Christ! I beg of you, dearest Spalatin, that as soon as Brisger returns, you will arrange with him to help this poor person, Elsie von Reinsberg, and see that no one treats her harshly or speaks unkindly to her. For who knows in what insignificant person we may have the opportunity of honouring the Lord Jesus. I fear greatly that at length we shall be deprived of the Word of God, because of our horrible ingratitude and our neglect of it. Almost all the churches think, "We shall steer clear of the poor and send them to Wittenberg," and this we are daily experiencing. No one is willing to do good and help the poor. Farewell, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1275.)

CCCXLVIII

TO THE KING OF DENMARK

Luther approves of Bishops being driven away.

December 2, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ our Lord, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious King! I have received your Majesty's letter, and am much pleased that you have extirpated the Bishops (who are always persecuting God's Word and intriguing in worldly matters), and I shall reply to your Majesty's epistle to the best of my ability. But I most humbly

beg your Majesty to reserve sufficient funds out of the Church property belonging to the Crown for the benefit of the churches and pastors. For if everything be dispersed how are the preachers to be maintained? Perhaps this admonition is not necessary, for doubtless your Majesty will act in a Christian manner; but there are so many among us who wish to grasp everything, and if God had not given us such pious Princes, who conscientiously see to the welfare of their subjects, many churches and parishes would lie waste.

So if Satan should try to wrest some of the Church funds in your lands through his emissaries, may God cause your Majesty to remember the needs of the Church, whose office it is to proclaim the Word of God, through which your subjects, both now and in future, may learn the way to everlasting bliss, and how to escape eternal condemnation, for all this is contained in the Word of God. May Christ, our dear Lord, be with your Majesty now and for ever. Amen. Your Majesty's obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXLIX

TO CHANCELLOR BRÜCK

The Archbishop's complaints of Luther.

December 9, 1536.

To the learned Dr. Brück, Chancellor to the Elector of Saxony. Grace and peace in Christ! After you told me that you had been ordered by my most gracious lord, at the instigation of the Elector of Brandenburg and his cousins, to ask me as to the proposed pamphlet against the Archbishop of Mayence, I beg to say (although I believe the good Princes mean well, and I wish them every prosperity) that I informed Their Royal Highnesses by word of mouth, both here and at Torgau, that I would rather they tried to improve their cousin the Cardinal, and prevent him casting contempt on the Lord Jesus Christ and tormenting poor people, which would be more salutary than worrying over what I write.

And I am convinced that I cannot be convicted of

insulting a whole race when I am forced to tell the truth to a knave ; and if the house of Brandenburg feels itself insulted through what I have written of the Cardinal, it would be more seemly if they felt the honour of their house injured through his conduct, and punished him themselves, instead of leaving it to me to do.

It is really something quite new to defend one who does evil, and persecute those who punish it. The tribe of Judah was the highest and noblest of the whole human family, and yet it did not feel itself insulted when King Ahab was punished by the prophet Elijah, even as prophets punished many kings. And there is no race so good that it has not at times an unworthy member. How would it be if judges, nay, even princes and lords, were to be called traducers because they justly condemned one of good family to be beheaded or hanged ? Every thief would then have cause to say that he was being ignominiously treated because he was to be hanged. Yes, but, my dear fellow, why steal ? Oh, dear sir, are you not, with all your wisdom, accusing me thus ? In conclusion, kings and princes are subject to God, who first uses gentle means to reclaim them, even when they are very wicked. When these are of no avail, then God punishes them through His wrath. If they mock the first punishment, they must weep to all eternity over the second. If I do the Cardinal injustice, I sit here under an Elector of Saxony to be judged.

Please accept this hasty summary of the matter. If I had time I could, by the grace of God, do it better. But I shall justify myself to the Cardinal himself. For he must be laughing in his sleeve at the whole affair. I commend you to God. Amen. Your obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCL

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH

Lauterbach worried in his pastoral office.

December 27, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ ! Act thus, my dear Anton ;

be strong in silence and in hope, and so you will overcome in Christ this sophistical grammarian. Through silence one can do much in self-defence in such cases, till we can set you free and place you elsewhere, as we hope to do.

Meanwhile it is much more dignified to put up with the injustice than to act. The right asserts itself at the end. As to the excellent Johannes, you have quite upset me. I hear he is imprisoned in Castle Leuchtenberg, from where that letter was written. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1452.)

CCCLI

TO WOLFGANG BRAUER, PASTOR AT JESSEN

On private communion.

December 30, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ, worthy Herr Pastor! Regarding the question which your good friend at Lintz, Sigmund Haugreuter, wished to be laid before me, this is my answer, that it is not the duty of himself and household to communicate thus, having no call or command to do so, although his tyrannical superior refuses to administer the sacrament, in spite of it being his duty to do so. For he can be saved through believing the Word.

It might become a great scandal were the sacrament of the Lord's Supper handed about in the different houses, and in the long run do much harm, causing divisions and creating sects; for nowadays people are so strange and the devil so mad. For the early Christians in Acts did not specially partake of the sacrament in their own houses, but all came together to do so, and even had they done it, such an example does not now hold good, even as it is not customary now to have all possessions in common, as was the case then, for now the gospel is proclaimed along with the sacraments. But it is only proper that the head of the house should teach God's Word to those under him, for God has commanded us to instruct our children and servants. But the sacrament and confession

should be administered by His professing servants, because Christ says it was instituted in memory of Himself, which is, in St. Paul's words, to show the Lord's death till He come ; and at the same time he condemns those who wish to partake of it alone without tarrying for one another. And no one can baptize himself. For these sacraments belong to the Church, and must not be mixed up with the duties devolving on the head of a house. So although there is nothing specially said on this subject in the Bible, it must not be lightly undertaken without special directions from God, for no good would ensue. You may say this, dear pastor, to your friend from me. I commit you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther, Amsdorf, Agricola, and Spalatin had now finished the articles for the future Diet by the Elector's command.

(No date.)

Grace and peace in the Lord ! As Dr. Anton himself is coming to you, I have nothing special to relate of our life and doings. See that you prove a good friend as well as combatant to both emissaries, for the honour of their King and also of our Prince. I am glad that Dr. Anton is at length free from the courts of justice. For my part I already fear the worst, as the other ambassador is lingering too long. For people's patience might easily be exhausted, considering what sort of gentlemen these highly esteemed Cardinals are, for they as well as the Popes are deceivers, thieves, robbers, nay, very devils in the flesh. Would that there were more kings of England to slay them ! For the Ambassador, Paul Vergerius, said to me here, "Ha! the King of England causes the Cardinals and Bishops to be murdered. But . . .," etc. He then made a movement with the hands, growling and threatening the King with evils such as no potentate has ever endured, certainly not expressed in so many words, but with compressed lips. They are rascals through and through, even to the heart's core. God make you believe this.

Priest Albrecht in Halle has taken away the Abbot's staff at Zinna and the Monstrance in Jutterbock with other vessels, with all due ceremony, leaving behind the written and sealed certificates testifying they were once there. The staff and the Monstrance will bring in great sums. He is in very deed worthy of the rank of Cardinal, one who in cunning might successfully vie with and speedily surpass all other Cardinals if the reins were only left in his hands. For even thus they plundered the churches and stole altar trappings, mass money, and precious stones in Rome and over Italy, and they continue to do so. You perhaps fancy when you read Cicero that Verres and Dionysius were greedy vultures. But nowadays one highly esteemed Cardinal of the Holy Catholic Church is possessed by a hundred Verreses and a thousand Dionysiuses, not only in heart, but he openly perpetrates such rascality, as these deeds testify.

We look for your return, and if an unpleasant rumour reaches you, pay no attention to it. We hope that even if an epidemic should spread abroad we shall have moderately pure air for our little bit of sky. Things would look otherwise if it were really an epidemic. Everywhere on the face of this earth men are liable to decay. We cannot all remain alive here upon earth or we would never reach yonder. My wife sends you greetings, and often thinks of you. Beware that you do not make me jealous, in case I might revenge myself upon you in a similar manner. Farewell in the Lord, and greet Caspar Cruciger and all our people, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

1537

The Protestants held their congress in Schmalkalden in February 1537, where Luther was very ill. It was resolved to restate the articles of the Augsburg Confession, which was considered too mild for the times, and for this it was not Melancthon's smooth pen which was called into requisition, but that of Luther. This was the origin of the so-called Schmalkaldischen articles, which were an elucidation and supplement of the Augsburg Confession, and strengthened the Evangelicals in their faith.

CCCLIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther sends the articles to the Prince.

January 3, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! By command of your Grace I arranged with Herr Nicolas Amsdorf, M. Eisleben, and M. Spalatin (for Menius and Myconius were too far away), who were here about St. Innocent's Day, to revise the articles as you wished, but on account of my weakness, caused by Satan, I am sure, were several days over them instead of one, as I hoped. These being confirmed and signed by them, I now send to your Grace by our good friend, M. George Spalatin. We all humbly plead, as some regard us with suspicion, fancying we wish to imperil you princes and lords with your lands through our reckless projects, that your Grace would rebuke them, for we would rather run any risk than endanger your Grace's lands and those of other lords. Therefore your Grace will know how far such articles may be accepted by them, for we do not wish them to be burdensome to any, for each must be left free to adopt them or not as he pleases.

I herewith commit your Grace to the dear God.
Your Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLIV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Written on the way to Schmalkalden. Luther left Wittenberg January 31, staying in Torgau, Grimma, Altenburg, Weimar (where he preached February 4), Arnstadt, and Waltershausen.

February 1, 1537.

Grace and peace! Although I fear this letter may be late, still I shall write to say I firmly hope you have been free from your pain up till now, and thus my prayers have been answered. A report has got abroad that His Holiness the Bishop of Aix is on the way from Nürnberg

to our Princes. This was written direct from Coburg to the Princes, who replied that should he come he must be sent straight to Schmalkalden. So if he really come he is expected there. Yes, if he really come! And if he do, doubtless it is not from fear, but to try to get help for the Turks, otherwise—— For what are we Lutherans but lambs who are being led to the slaughter whenever that destroyer requires their help? We shall see. The Emperor's Chancellor, Dr. Matthias Held, shall also be present. Perhaps this convention may be more numerous than was thought. God grant it may be an authorised council! A canon who has resigned his canonry and taken a wife is here from Zeitz; a handsome man, who swears by all that is sacred that far more learned men will be there than at the Mantua Church Congress, if it ever takes place. I write this for your consolation. I know how anxious you are. Farewell, and visit my people, and also Bugenhagen's Rome with his little "Quiriten." We are all well and in good spirits, and have been sumptuously entertained in the castles of Altenburg and Grimma.

We fancied we should have slept at our old Pylades' ¹ and Theseus's. ² Therefore, according to our custom, we announced ourselves through some verses. I enclose mine, and Philip, our Homer, also sends his. Altenburg, two o'clock in the night.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCLV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther preached before the Princes when he arrived in Schmalkalden.

February 9, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ! I write while I have leisure, for soon we shall have enough to do, and there is no chance of our separating before Sabbath Latare, so sorely are we pressed by people and work. Many believe that not even at the Mantua Congress will more learned men congregate. Yes, doubtless more mules, asses, and

¹ Melanchthon?

² Spalatin.

even horses, whose riders are greater asses than themselves, will assemble there, as it is written (according to Peter Balbinus's interpretation), "Be ye not as the horse or the mule, who have no understanding." Yesterday the Landgrave and the Herzog of Württemberg entered in great state. To-day the Princes are having a private conference while I write.

Yesterday Spalatin preached, and I to-day, before the Princes in the town church, which is so enormous that our voices sounded like a shrew-mouse to the people. The air is good, and we are well seen to. You must regret not seeing so many great men, and being seen by them. Yesterday I suffered greatly, but shall be content if the pain disappear as easily as formerly, and not torture me more. I wish you the same happiness. The Papal legate went from Weimar to Halle to the Cardinal. Perhaps he was annoyed not to get speaking to the Princes. He has not appeared here. It is no matter although the Papal pride be turned into gall. I have nothing else to write about. Greet Dr. Hans Agricola from me with his Grinkel. I fancy the boxes with the powders and packets which were among the luggage belong to him. He must let us know, in case we appropriate other people's possessions. I am sure you could easily find messengers to send by the help of the steward, if it please His Excellency. Greet your wife and children from me. MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—Pray with Caspar Cruciger for us, and make others do so also.

(Schütze.)

CCCLVI

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther was very ill. The Prince sent for the Erfurt physician, George Sturtz.

February 14, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ! Yesterday I wrote you, Valentine's Eve, and to-day I again write on St. Valentine's Day itself.

St. Valentine has turned the invalid into a convalescent.

But not the St. Valentine, the god of frail humanity, but the one sole Valentine, who heals all who trust in Him. Hence I hope by His grace at length to be made whole.

We are already here eight days doing nothing. All are sick of the place and of this idleness, and long to depart. The Princes and towns are occupied with entirely different matters from what we imagined, and do not ask us to join. May the Lord Jesus bless their deliberations. Dr. Benedict and Dr. Bleikardt have become the Pope's enemies. Ah, how mercilessly they torture him through his own decrees! More by word of mouth. The Emperor's ambassador arrived last night. To-day we shall perhaps hear Dr. Held.

We are beggars here. We eat the bread of the Landgrave and the Herzog of Württemberg (for these have the best bakers), and we drink wine with the Nürnbergers. We receive meat and fish from Court. But you know from experience that the firm, heavy bread is a seed for stone. Perhaps I shall learn this also, for the bread both at Court and in town is the same. They have also excellent trout, but they boil them in the same water with other fish, and serve them up in the soup! Oh, what food! Therefore I beg the cooks to deliver them alive, and I then have them prepared by the Nürnberg cooks. Certainly it is the express command of the Princes that we should be supplied with everything, and that all should be delicately cooked, but it is consumed and spoiled by tradesmen and servants, as is the way at Court. I have nothing else to write about. Farewell, and pray for us.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLVII

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

Luther was seriously ill. Myconius, the Elector, Melanchthon, and Spalatin prayed earnestly at his bedside, and he was taken in a royal carriage to Tambach with Bugenhagen.

February 27, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ! Meantime you must hire horses, dear Käthie, for what you require, for my gracious

lord will keep your horses, and send Herr Philip home with them. I left Schmalkalden yesterday and drove hither in ——'s own carriage. I was very ill in Schmalkalden, not three days well; could neither sleep, eat, nor drink. In short, I was almost dead, and commended you with the children to God and to my dear Lord, never expecting to see you again. If God had not had mercy upon me, I would have been in my grave. But the earnest prayers and tears of so many people have effected what medicine was powerless to do, and last night I got relief, and feel as if I had been born anew.

Therefore let the dear children, with Tante Lene, thank God, the faithful Father, without whom this father would certainly have been lost. The pious Prince sent messengers flying in all directions for help, but it was of no avail.

Your remedy was useless. Verily God has done wondrous things for me this night, and will continue to do this through the prayers of pious people. I write all this to you, because my most gracious lord ordered you to be sent for, fancying I would die on the road, and wished you to see me; but now it is not necessary, so you can remain at home, for God Himself has abundantly helped me, and I can look forward to a joyful home-coming. To-day we are in Gotha.¹ I have written you four times, and wonder that nothing has reached you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLVIII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther calls Tambach his Peniel, for there the Lord delivered him from his sore distress, for the time at least.

February 27, 1537.

Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercy and all consolation, who saw your prayers and tears, and in the second watch of the night, my dearest Philip, contrary to all expectation, gave the deliverance which had been so long looked for in vain.

¹ This letter was written at night.

. . . I send you the news at once. Let my beloved lord and the others know. For I know how gladly they would have helped me. I am now prepared for whatever God may send, be it life or death, because I am now out of the pit and have reached our own land; therefore I feel impelled to write those hurried letters. The rest you will hear from the messenger Tipontius, who was so elated that he wished to flee to you at once. Thank, with me, the Father of all grace, that the dear God may perfect His work, that through this experience we may learn to pray and look for help from heaven. May God protect you all, and crush Satan under His feet along with all the monstrosities of the Roman Court. Amen. At half-past two in the night in Tambach,¹ the spot where I was delivered, for this is my Peniel, where the Lord appeared to me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLIX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther writes from Wittenberg on his recovery.

March 21, 1537.

To the highly esteemed Herr George Spalatin, Archbishop of Meissen. Grace and peace in Christ! At last I write you, dear Spalatin, having for many days observed Sabbatical repose with my pen. I now begin to eat and drink, although my legs can scarcely carry my body. I have lost more strength than I could have believed, but with rest and warm compresses I hope to regain it. My Käthie greets you respectfully, and regrets that she brought nothing for your dear daughters, but is having little books bound to send as a remembrance, hoping you will take the will for the deed. She is always extolling your benevolence. May you prosper in Christ, and pray for us.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1276.)

¹ Written on morning of 27th.

CCCLX

TO CONRAD CORDATUS

About Cordatus's call to Eisleben.

May 12, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ! I am very pleased at your call to my fatherland, my Cordatus, for there you will be an ever-present combatant against W., whom you abhor with a just and righteous hatred. If it please you, and you can leave Nimmern without regret, then what God has ordained and what I desire will take place. The air may be better than on marshy soil, for it is purified through furnaces burning night and day. I thank God that you are better, but pray curb your suspicions, or they will cause future illnesses. Get rid of such ideas, as I also must do, for our enemy the devil goes about trying not only to destroy the soul, but to weaken the body through such thoughts, for he knows that the state of the soul depends in great measure on the condition of the body, for a mournful spirit consumes the flesh and the bones, while a merry heart makes a joyful old age. I tell you all this although I do not like to appear to teach you. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1455.)

CCCLXI

TO JOHANN SCHREINER, PASTOR AT GRIMMA

Luther was angry at the nobles expecting too much from the clergy.

July 9, 1537.

To the worthy Herr Magister Johann Schreiner, pastor and superintendent at Grimma, my gracious friend.

Grace and peace in Christ, dear magister and pastor! Say to the nobility, which Spalatin refuses to do, that one cannot have the clergy exactly as they wish, and they should thank God for the pure word, which they now hear out of one book, when they think of past times under the Pope and the nonsense they had to listen to

and pay dearly for. How can the nobles expect to procure Dr. Martins and Philips for such a beggarly service? If nothing short of St. Augustines and St. Ambrosiuses will satisfy, then let them supply them themselves. When a pastor pleases the Lord Jesus and is faithful to Him, then a nobleman, who is certainly of much less importance, ought also to be pleased with him. A prince rejoices when he has three outstanding and competent nobles in his government, and exercises patience with the less gifted who fill up the gaps. But they expect to have the best of everything, forgetting they are far from that themselves, and have no desire to be.

You must arrange these matters yourselves, for we are overwhelmed with business from every country, so that we have no rest. This letter may be read by princes and lords, or wherever you desire. I have no objections. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLXII

TO WOLFGANG CAPITO, DOCTOR OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AND FAITHFUL SERVANT OF THE CHURCH IN STRASSBURG.

July 9, 1537.

My beloved brother in Christ, grace and peace in Christ! I intended answering your letter, dear Capito, and sending it through the Frenchmen to whom you introduced me, but they may perhaps tell you what they have seen and heard themselves. It is a great effort to me to arrange the different parts of my books; indeed I would rather see them destroyed, for I scarcely care to own any of them, except that on the bondage of the will¹ and the Catechism. But I have remitted the matter to Cruciger, who will see if anything can be done. I heard that you would help also, but at the same time I prayed that the Lord Jesus would not permit you to work in vain. I have heard about the Augsburg devil, but we shall look to Him who began his work. He will appear at

¹ *Vom geknechteten Willen.*

the right time and not tarry. For I am convinced that you and Bucer are acting honestly, and all who speak or write to me think the same. My Katherine thanks you for the gold ring, and I have never seen her more annoyed than when she found it was either stolen or lost through her own carelessness (which I hardly believe, although I always cast it up to her), for I assured her that this present was sent as an omen that your church was at one with ours, and this is a great sorrow to the poor woman. I write thus to you to let you see our hearts are set on unity. May Christ Himself conclude the matter. Amen.

But one thing I must add, do not send anything else to my wife, in case of aggravating her sorrow. For Christ is sufficient for both parties. Greet all belonging to you warmly, and bid them think the best of us, as we do of them. May the Lord Jesus set His seal on this desire, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory to all eternity. Amen. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1278.)

CCCLXIII

TO COBAN HESSE

Luther thanks him for Latin translation of Psalter.

August 1, 1537.

To the celebrated poet of our day, the honoured Coban Hesse, my beloved brother in the Lord.

Grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ, dear Coban! I have received your Psalter, cherished brother in the Lord, and have read it with great delight, and will always read it, so much do I prize the labour you have expended on the book which is so dear to me. And I thank you from the heart for enabling me to see this beautiful and sacred poetry which was so loved by the Hebrews, in the Latin tongue. For I laud and admire the industry of those who by translation, explanation, or other means try to elucidate this exquisite poetry, although all may not be alike fitted for the task, for we cannot all do everything. Therefore I praise your work with all

my heart, for perhaps you are the only one sufficiently acquainted with the Latin tongue who could have translated this highly spiritual poetry.

You have given ample evidence in this work that you are possessed of the true poetic spirit, which is Heaven's gift, and which has been more abundantly bestowed upon you than upon others ; for no other poet has known how to reproduce this royal poet as you have done, and you never could have done it, even with your ability, had you not been impregnated with the spirit of the whole. But such emotions of the heart do not spring from nature, nor from the ordinary poetic gift, but are certainly a gift of the Spirit and an impulse from heaven. Therefore I wish you not only much happiness, but praise my Lord Jesus that He has through His Spirit qualified you for this divine work, which will be specially useful to the young, who may reap not only culture and poetry from this poem, but also spiritual knowledge, through the assistance of a faithful teacher. For I confess to being much more touched and swayed by such poetic effusions than by the spoken word, even were it out of the mouth of a Demosthenes or a Cicero. So if I experience this with minor poems, how much more must the contents of the Psalms move me, a book which I have studied from my youth, and which, thank God, has never failed to delight and benefit me. For although I would never despise the gifts of others, yet I venture to assert in holy joy that I would not, for the thrones and kingdoms of the world, exchange the delight I have experienced in the Psalms through the Holy Ghost. For I have none of the foolish humility which would deny God's gifts to me. In myself I have truly enough to make me humble, but I must rejoice in God as I do in my German Psalter, and now much more in your Coban one, but all to the praise and glory of God to all eternity. May you abide in Him for ever. Amen. MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCLXIV

TO FRIEDRICH MYCONIUS, PREACHER IN GOTHA

Congratulations. Luther makes jocular allusion to Myconius refusing him burial in Gotha, where he took so ill on his journey from Schmalkalden to Wittenberg.

July 27, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ ! I rejoice with you, dear Friedrich, that God has at length given you a Fritz. Having seven daughters, I can quite believe you are delighted to have a son. So once more I wish you happiness, and pray that he may continue healthy, and be endowed with even richer gifts than his father. Amen. I laud your determination not to let me be buried within your bishopric (Gotha), although since then I have often lamented it. For now that my life has been prolonged, I see things I would not have seen had I been at rest in God, or in Gotha. But He who has put all things under His feet will also overcome this insignificant evil.

Even as the angels are round about those who believe, so those who have eyes to see find themselves surrounded by much good. My Käthie greets you, and wishes you much happiness over the birth of your son, and advises you strongly that all the milk that can be spared should be kept for the little son till he can take other food, and that your wife should be made to take very good care of herself. But as a husband you know all this yourself, although my Käthie seems to have doubts on the subject. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCLXV

TO THE COUNCIL AT TORGAU

Request for ground for a house for their pastor.

August 21, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ ! Honoured and prudent gentlemen and friends, I have often spoken with your pastor as to his way of living, and what he can leave to

his wife and children. He said he was quite contented, although his Elsie would like a little house, which is only reasonable. There is no house to be had, so they showed me a piece of ground upon which they thought of building one, next to the sexton's. Now I lay this matter before my most gracious friends, thinking it would only be praiseworthy (seeing it is in your power) to show your gratitude to your faithful pastor, who has served you fourteen years, by providing him with what he requires, which it is usual for the citizens to do. So I would request you in a friendly manner either to present him or help him to procure such a piece of ground, which may be lying neglected. By so doing you will thereby give a proof of your love to the Word and its servants, which, alas, too seldom receive any token of favour. I am sure you will act in a Christian manner in this matter. I herewith commend you to God. Amen. MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLXVI

TO AMBROSIOUS BERNDT

Berndt, an M.A. of Wittenberg, a widower, who afterwards married Luther's orphan niece.

November 1537.

You are aware, dear magister, that God's mercy is much greater than our misfortunes. Although, as you observe, you have good cause to mourn, yet it is only a little vinegar mixed with your good sugar. For your wife it is far better, for she has passed away, and now lives in Christ. Would to God I too were that length! I would not long to return here.

Your suffering is only temporal, viz. the natural longing for your dear one. Although your wife is dead, she has left pleasant memories behind her, the memory of a pious, loving, obedient inmate of your house. You must comfort yourself with such thoughts, and let it be seen, by not forgetting her, that you were an affectionate husband. You are a good dialectician, and teach it to others, so now you have an opportunity of practising the

same, and letting your friends see it being exemplified in your present behaviour. When you compare your misfortune with that of others, you will perceive that your wife's death is not in itself a circumstance to be deplored, except as it affects the deepest feelings of your heart, which is ever the case when people are deprived of parents, children, and such-like. One would do well to recall what the Emperor Maximilian said in trying to comfort his son Philip over the loss of a faithful, brave, and pious man who fell in battle: "Dear Philip, you must accustom yourself to such trials, for you will still lose many who are dear to you." So Christians must do the same; there is no other way.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCLXVII

TO THE BURGHMASTER AND COUNCIL OF THE REFORMED SWISS TOWNS

Luther expresses his joy at the Swiss joining the Wittenberger *Concord*.

December 1, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ, our Lord and Saviour, honoured and dear sirs and friends! I have delayed far too long in answering your letter, which I received at Schmalkalden. But I hope you will excuse the delay, for I know you are well aware how much rests upon my shoulders daily, especially now that I am old and weak; and I have had to tear myself away from friends and business to steal the time to write this.

I have again read your letter, and am highly pleased to see that all former sharpness and suspicions have been lulled to rest, and that you are really in earnest as to joining the Wittenberg *Concord* and doing your best to promote it. The God and Father of all unity and love will doubtless complete the good work which He has graciously begun, as it is written in Prov. xvi. 7: "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

It is evident, and cannot be otherwise, that such great

dissension as has existed between us cannot be healed all at once without leaving rents and scars behind it. For with you, as well as with us, there must be some who are suspicious of such *Concord*. But if we are in earnest on both sides, and make up our minds to adhere to it, the dear God and Father will grant His grace, so that others may through time give way, and the troubled waters will again be at rest.

Therefore, I beseech you, set limits to those among you who are raising a hue and cry against the *Concord*, and see to it that competent people are appointed to teach the people the significance of this matter, so that it may not be hindered. Even as we here, both in our writings and sermons, avoid doing anything to inflame the people against you in case of doing injury to the *Concord*, which we are most anxious to see become an accomplished fact, and have vowed to God to make an end of the fighting and disputing, of which we have had more than enough without any good results being achieved.

And I would once more humbly plead, as before, that you would believe that I mean what I say, and shall do my uttermost for the furtherance of the bond. God is my witness that I shall do this. For these dissensions have helped neither me nor any one else, but have done much harm.

Excuse the short answer I must make to your letter, for my head is daily burdened with business, not to speak of thoughts, so I cannot write and discuss matters with every one as if I had nothing else to do. I herewith commit you, with all belonging to you, to the Father of mercies and all consolation. May He grant to both parties of us His Holy Spirit, so that our hearts may dissolve in Christian love, and all the scum and rust of devilish human wickedness and suspicion may be swept away, to the praise and honour of His holy name, and to the salvation of many souls and the destruction of the devil and the Pope, with their followers. Amen. MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLXVIII

TO MARTIN BÜCKER

Luther encloses this letter to the Swiss, and tells of Bugenhagen's work in Copenhagen, where he acquired a warm friend in Herzog Albrecht of Prussia.

December 6, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ! At last, dear Bucker, I have answered the letter of the Swiss which you gave me at Schmalkalden. Excuse the delay to them as best you can, for you know, besides the sloth of age, how the care of our Church rests upon me, as well as many hateful matters. I send you a copy of the letter, so that you may have the rudder to steer the ship. I have referred everything to you and Capito, else I would have had no reason for writing so lovingly as I have done; for you two have made it difficult for me to do so, as you told me my letter might reach the hands of some who were opposed to the *Concord*. But you will settle everything according to the gift that has been given you. I have at least written openly and honestly.

I do not approve so highly of the Latin Confession of the Swiss as of the German one of the towns, especially in the article of the sacrament of the altar. The other is well enough as the times go. Greet the honoured Herr Dr. Capito from me, and all your people. Pommer is still in Denmark, and by the blessing of God is progressing favourably with his undertaking. He has crowned the King and Queen like a real bishop. He has also established a school, etc. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1284.)

1538

The Imperial Chancellor Held, perceiving the Protestants' zeal, thought it time for the Catholic Princes to act, so he managed to get Albrecht of Mayence, the Archbishop of Salzburg, the Dukes of Bavaria and Brunswick, Herzog George of Saxony, with the Emperor and his brother, to sign a treaty at Nürnberg to protect one another. The Protestants received the

Margrave of Brandenburg, Henry of Saxony, and the King of Denmark into their bond. Luther published his Schmalkaldischen Articles in this year.

CCCLXIX

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

John Karg, who was later convicted of heresy, arrested on suspicion of false doctrine.

January 4, 1538.

To the Serene High-born Prince John Frederick, Elector of Saxony. Grace and peace in Christ, Most Serene Prince! By your Grace's orders I at once sought an interview with Magister George Karg in the sacristy, and spoke very sharply to him, in the presence of Jonas, Cruciger, and Philip, concerning the note. At first he tried to deny he had written it, but when it was found proven we ordered him to send us his opinion in few words, which he promised to do. As we were discussing matters an official appeared to take him to the castle and place him in security by your Grace's command, but upon our own responsibility we caused him to be taken to his lodgings. But soon after the bailiff immured him in the castle, which we are now glad of on our own account. But as Magister Karg did not write yesterday, I sent the two chaplains to him, in my name, to demand the promised document. At first they were refused admittance, and no one was allowed to see him without an order from your Grace; but the bailiff changed his mind and sent for them, and they induced him to send me the enclosed. At his own request I went to him to-day myself, with Dr. Jonas, and talked with him, and found that the priest (Pfaff), of whom he spoke in the document, was the true knave, and that he had been unjustly treated. I am very angry that they let him away from Freiberg, for it put the poor young fellow up to discuss matters in a way I never heard of before; but seeing he allowed us to point out his mistake to-day, and confessed he had been twice led astray, we hope that he will be truly converted. For he is an inexperienced youth, and perhaps at first objected to our persons, and then to our doctrine. It has always been so

with those who differed from us. They first disparaged ourselves, and then plotted against our doctrine. But in order not to make light of this peculiar assault of Satan, I shall not as yet ask your Electoral Grace to set him free till we have sifted the matter thoroughly, for I have some strange thoughts about certain people who are perhaps innocent. But your Grace will know best how to conduct things in a princely manner. The devil is in earnest, and sends his servants (among whom was certainly the Freiberg priest) among us, who creep in ungreeted by us. I commend you to God. Amen. Your Electoral Grace's obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLXX

TO MAGISTER JOHN AGRICOLA IN EISLEBEN

Agricola abused Luther's permission to lecture by disseminating his Antinomian errors; Luther withdrew the permission.

January 6, 1538.

My greeting! I announced to the school rector, my Agricola, that you should discontinue the theological lectures which, at your request, I permitted you to deliver, and that henceforth you should entirely renounce theology. I communicate this decision to yourself in the present letter, so that you may know that in future you must receive permission from the University to hold such lectures. What you may say against us behind our backs I neither can nor will prevent, but be upon your guard. Pray and humble yourself beneath the mighty hand of God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXI

TO FRANZ BURKHARDT

Disputations with the Antinomians.

January 7, 1538.

To the well-born Herr Franz Burkhardt, Saxon Chancellor. Grace and peace in Christ! As you write that

no one has sent you my thesis contained in the third and fourth disputation against the Antinomians, I forward them to you, for you say you have got the two previous ones; and I am astonished that no one has as yet sent you this trifle, especially as everything else is at once transmitted to Court, not even the news of the slightest flea-bite being forgotten.

Next Saturday I shall hold the next disputation, and again listen to those Antinomians, if they desire it. All the stories from Freiberg concerning Jacob agree so well that I am forced to believe them, but with deep grief. I shall not as yet say anything to the Prince about Meister Karg, as he may be reformed, for he receives correction greedily, a sign of a man who has been misled. He indulges in odd fancies which have no foundation. But more of this again. May you and yours prosper in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXII

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther defends himself for not writing.

February 6, 1538.

You do well, my Jonas, in writing so often to me. But it would be even better if you showed consideration for my negligence. It does not proceed from laziness, but because, as you are aware, letter-writing, like the composition of poetry, can only be indulged in with a light heart. My brain is often so worn out with thinking that I neither can nor dare write anything. But Christ the conqueror lives, who has robbed the powers of these northern regions of their might, to whom be honour to all eternity. I commend you to Him; pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXIII

TO NICOLAS HAUSMANN

Luther speaks of his health and politics.

March 27, 1538.

Grace and peace in Christ! I herewith send the two

pamphlets against the Jews, and the Cardinals' proposals for the reformation of the Church. Dr. Jonas has gone instead of me to Brunswick, as I could not risk the journey on account of my health.

I have no news that you have not long known, viz. that there is no peace between the Emperor and the French. The Venetians are in a dilemma on account of the Sultan. He has blocked up their fleet, so that they cannot get out to the open sea.

If the Emperor and the Italian Princes do not come to their aid they will again be compelled to make a treaty with the Sultan.

May God forgive our sins and hasten the day of redemption. God grant this. Farewell in Christ, and pray for me. Greet Meister Peter.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXIV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Dr. Jonas represented Luther at Brunswick.

April 8, 1538.

Grace and peace in Christ ! I shall not try to emulate you, dear Jonas, in letter-writing, for you far surpass me in genius and rhetoric, as well as in inherited gifts ; and you have more to write about, for you are in the midst of heroes and heroic deeds ; for, I verily believe the armies of Troy and Greece would only have been bands of cowards had they not been inflamed to heroic deeds through the glorious poetry of Homer. We, for our part, confess Christ in quietness and in hope, and often far too feebly, for Magister Philip and I, especially, have been overwhelmed with cares and business of every kind, so that I, a worn-out old man, would prefer wandering in the garden (which is the old man's joy) to behold God's wondrous works, as manifest in trees, shrubs, flowers, and birds. This is the recreation I most dearly love, but of which I am deprived, through the sins of my youth, by being burdened with so many troublesome and fruitless occupations. Magister Johannes from Saxony,

my present messmate, will tell you all you wish to know. In your house all are well. Herr Philip's daughter, Hanna, with her husband and child, have arrived from the Halloren. Her husband is delighted to be able to partake of the sacrament here. I hope this tragedy may yet end well, so that we may boast it has been a tragic comedy. May Christ grant this. Say to Myconius I shall not answer his two letters, and that I envy him his leisure, and only wish that a healthy, strong, handsome young man such as he were only thought worthy to have a taste of my leisure.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

The Princes of Anhalt had offered to send a carriage to Wittenberg to take Luther to the country for a rest.

May 12, 1538.

Grace and peace in Christ! The Serene Princes of Anhalt asked me to fix a day on which I might be conveyed to Coswick or Wörlitz. Having no messenger I have not yet answered, and could not in one word. Perhaps you, as a living and eloquent Pericles, may tell them that on Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday I shall be fully occupied preaching and reading lectures, as you and Pommer are absent, and Agricola has been dismissed, not to speak of the numberless minor matters which constantly surround me. Therefore I must almost steal the time to bestow on the Princes, so Thursday after Cantate will be most convenient for me, and I can start on Wednesday after the sermon, and arrive that night, either in Wörlitz or Coswick, for the place is nothing to me, only the time. I can then remain all Thursday, returning on Friday for the Saturday. After *Vocem Jucunditatis* I shall have no more time, for I must rest the entire week except Friday. If it be necessary to write the Princes, I shall do so to-morrow or next day. In your house all is as you left it, except that the little

Sophie is rather feverish, but in no danger ; and little Martin and Paul have begun to shiver, but the weather is very warm here. My Käthie greets you. Greet the Princes respectfully from me. More about the Emperor and Turks when I write direct to the Princes.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXVI

TO EDWARD, BISHOP OF HEREFORD,
IN ENGLAND

Peace being in prospect between Charles V. and Francis, Henry VIII. wished to unite with the German Protestants, so, at his request, the Elector sent Burkhardt and Myconius of Gotha to London, where they were warmly welcomed by the King.

May 12, 1538.

Grace and peace in the Lord ! As our good friends and ambassadors were being despatched on a journey to your exalted King, I could not refrain from giving them letters to you, not wishing to appear forgetful in your eyes ; for, besides having had the pleasure of making your acquaintance when in Wittenberg, you have since then done me a great service in giving me counsel regarding my enemy Calculus, a kindness which I can never forget. We often talk of you, especially as, with so many changes in your kingdom, you either cannot write, or the letters have gone astray, with which possibility we try to console ourselves, for we feared that this persistent silence was a sign of something having happened to retard the progress of the gospel ; for, some actually assert that your King, led astray by Papal wiles, meditates a reconciliation with the Pope. Between hope and fear, we have been praying that Satan might be crushed under your feet. As yet we are ignorant of the state of the gospel among you. But we hope, with the return of our embassy, to receive a joyful evangelium and to hear a veritable gospel of your English Church. Regarding the position of Church and State in our Germany, you can hear all the details from our

people. May the Lord Jesus endue you with more of His gifts and grace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

My Käthie sends her greetings to your Eminence. May you prosper in Christ, and accept my respectful compliments.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXVII

To JUSTUS JONAS

In reference to a letter of May 12.

May 21, 1538.

Grace and peace in Christ! I am amazed that my letter was so long in reaching you, or that you were so dilatory in answering it. I am willing to do whatever is most convenient for the Princes. I hope I may be able to appear on the appointed day, and at the place fixed, of which I am doubtful, owing to the state of my health and the assaults of Satan; but by the power of Christ I may get a respite. The reports we have heard about the Turk are, alas, too true. We hear the cry of blood and the voice of the oppressed against Germany. Ferdinand's hands are stained with blood, as he listens to the blasphemies of the Pope and the assaults on the truth. Who will have mercy on those who provoke God and knowingly worship lies? But Christ will remember His poor people, and at length manifest His power upon the proud enemy, the cruel Mahomed. God grant it. Greet the Most Serene Princes. I shall inform you by word of mouth of the future preacher in Zerbst. I have noted down several topics of conversation. I can determine nothing in regard to Weller. In your house all are well, except that your Lieschen is not yet free from fever. These paroxysms are not peculiar to this quarter and season only. May you prosper in the Lord, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXVIII

TO ANTON UNRUHE, LAWYER IN TORGAU

Luther thanks him for procuring justice for a poor woman.

June 15, 1538.

Grace and peace in Christ, dear wise sir and friend! *Timeo Dominum, erudimini, judices terrae.* This should be the daily motto of the judge, and I believe it is yours, for all who know you testify that you are a pious, Christian judge. I must thank you for helping Margaretha Doroten in preventing the noble Hans from depriving her of all she has. You know that Dr. Martin is not only theologian and defender of the faith, but defender of the rights of the poor, who flee to him from every quarter seeking help and letters to the magistrates, so that he would have enough to do with only this. But Dr. Martin serves the poor gladly, as you also do, for you fear God, love Jesus Christ, and search the Scriptures daily. The Lord Jesus will one day reward you for this. But was it not enough to prove your love to me by granting my request without presenting me with a cask of Torgau beer of your own brewing? I am unworthy of your kindness, for although I know you are not poor, God having given you abundance, still I would rather you had given it to your poor people, whose united prayers would have brought down a richer blessing upon you than that of poor Martin alone. But I must thank you for the token of goodwill. And may God reward you.

WITTENBERG.
(De Wette.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCLXXIX

TO THE HERZOGIN ELIZABETH OF BRUNSWICK

Elizabeth was the daughter of Joachim I. of Brandenburg. She visited Luther with her mother, who had fled from her husband.

September 4, 1538.

Grace and peace in Christ, Most Serene High-born Princess, most gracious Lady! I and my dear Käthie thank your Grace for the cheese. The present is most

welcome although it were much smaller, and proves that you are well inclined to God's Holy Word. We pray that the Father of all mercies may, through His dear Son, richly endow and maintain you with His Holy Spirit till the day of our everlasting redemption. We are ever your Grace's devoted servants. Amen. I herewith send your Royal Highness some slips of mulberry and fig trees, the only rare things I have at present. Your Princely Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLXXX

TO JACOB PROBST, PASTOR IN BREMEN

Luther recommends a poor preacher.

September 15, 1538.

Grace and peace in Christ! I seldom write to you, dear Jacob, and do not answer your letters as you perhaps wish, but I know you do not take it ill, for you are aware how I am borne down by heaps of business, work, years, and temptations; and I also think you do not stand in need of my letters, for God has endowed you so richly that you are able to rule and comfort both yourself and others in this evil world, which is so full of ingratitude and contempt of God's Word.

But enough of this! There are two upright and learned men here from Lower Saxony, but we are very poor ourselves, and are overrun with troops of the destitute, whom it is impossible for us to maintain, however willing. But as they cannot be of much use here, on account of the language, Herr Philip thinks we should send one to you, on the chance of a vacant church, so as to prevent them being idle, especially as you are rich, and your superfluity could be turned to good account in relieving their poverty. But if the people about you are too ungrateful to support him till he gets a living, then send him back to us, and we shall share what we have with him.

The latest news is that I, an old man, so laden with

work and so weary, am becoming daily younger, because new sects are constantly rising against me, to combat which the energy of youth is required. If we had no other proof that we were called and chosen of God and possessed His Word, this alone would be sufficient—that we had to put up with so many sects, who are always brewing some mischief, some of whom proceed from ourselves, not to speak of our spiritual conflict with the Pope and the devil, and our friends' scorn of the Divine Word; but we are not better than the apostles and prophets, nor than our Lord Himself.

It is constantly being reported that the Emperor of the French and the Venetians have united their fleets against the Turks, and that they are very successful at sea against the arch-foe. May God graciously hear the prayers of the Christians.

My Kätjie and your godchild, my daughter, greet you, for the latter of whom I hope you will provide a good pious husband after my death. I write nothing about myself, except to beg that you will pray for me, that the Lord may deliver me from the attacks of Satan's angels, and, if it be His will, grant me a peaceful exit from this wretched world. The Lord be with you. Greet your dear wife from me and my Kätjie.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1285.)

CCCLXXXI

TO NICOLAS SPECHT, RECTOR OF THE SCHOOL
AT BAUTZEN

Luther wishes him joy on his marriage.

December 12, 1538.

Grace and peace in Christ! I wish you and your bride all that is good, my Herr Nicolas, and pray the Lord that He may be with you with His grace, and preserve you to all eternity.

As I cannot come to your wedding myself, on account of my health, and still more on account of my work, I send you through Anton a remembrance, no doubt a

small and insignificant one, but the portrait of the saintly John Huss, which I hope you will appreciate, not solely because of the thing itself, but for the sake of the feelings which prompted me to send it, as I wish you well from the bottom of my heart. May you be happy in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

1539

Charles V., after making peace with Francis I., summoned the Evangelical and Roman Catholic theologians to Frankfort in February to try to find a basis of agreement. Calvin joined the Council, where he met John Frederick of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, etc. He had delightful intercourse with Melanchthon, in whom Farel and he found an important ally. Herzog George of Saxony died this year, and Luther had the pleasure of establishing the Reformation in Leipsic under his brother Henry. The question of Philip of Hesse's double marriage also came up, and he succeeded in so far gaining the Reformers' consent thereto, to the grief of the Elector, that Bucer and Melanchthon witnessed the ceremony in Rothenburg on the Fulda, March 4, 1540. Joachim of Brandenburg, whose mother was Luther's intimate friend, introduced the Reformation into his Electorate this year.

CCCLXXXII

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther sends some new exegetical writings.

January 11, 1539.

Grace and peace! I have really nothing to say, dear Amsdorf, but could not let the messenger depart without a letter. Much is being said about the Emperor's arrival. It is amusing to hear the Papacy, that great martyr, boasting in her perilous position of her deliverer. Aleander, not a cheese merchant, like the monks, but a trafficker in kings, is running about taking kings captive. May God render his attempts abortive. Amen.

I herewith send the annotations on St. Matthew, a mutilated piece of work, which the printers have very properly printed on torn and stained paper.

I send it to you because you always say that you

never get anything sent you. I also send you a copy of the exposition of the Song of Solomon. You will perceive that it has been hastily written out by our people, or that I have added notes in a slipshod manner. But our brethren snatch away everything from under our hands. Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1464.)

CCCLXXXIII

CIRCULAR LETTER TO ALL THE CLERGY IN CHRIST
WHO LOVE THE GOSPEL

February 2, 1539.

We have been so led astray lately by reports of the Turks' approach, that we scarcely know what to believe. And in case God's wrath should be nearer than we think, and we should be surprised by the Turk, when, like the wolf, we have become so accustomed to the outcry that we feel secure, let us arm ourselves through prayer, pleading with God to keep the house and prevent such a visitation, and forgive our great and manifold sins, to the glory of His holy name.

The Papists have long intended to ruin our German lands, and their rage increases; and they are blinded enough to forget that, although able to set a thing agoing, it may not be in their power to stop it, and they themselves may perish in the general destruction. Were such a fearful war to break out, Germany might be ruined. But as the sins of both parties have waxed great—theirs through lying, blasphemy, murder, and persecuting innocent blood—ours through neglect of God's Word, ingratitude, and avarice, I fear much that God will visit us and our land with one or both of these scourges.

So I beg the clergy faithfully to admonish their people, holding up before them these two plagues, for this is no jesting matter; and I dislike playing the part of a prophet, for what I predict usually comes to pass. Let us pray earnestly that God may graciously visit us with some other scourge, pestilence, or whatever it may be, so that our

rulers may be spared to us, so that we may not suddenly be attacked by the Turks, or, what would be worse, through the devil fall out among ourselves and devour one another. For the devil never sleeps, and the Turk never fails to use an opportunity, and the Papists never rest, so their bloodthirstiness will never be quenched. As no human power can restrain these bloodhounds, God Himself must do so, as He has hitherto done ; so be pious and pray that God may not withdraw His protecting hand, and let us receive the penalty both parties merit for their heavy sins. The Papists do not pray, so let us do so, and have the assurance our prayers are heard, even as we have hitherto experienced what great things our prayers have achieved.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLXXXIV

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Melanchthon at the Conference at Frankfort with the Elector and Myconius, met the delegates of the Emperor and Ferdinand. On April 19 an agreement was signed. Luther thanked God in the church in Wittenberg on Sabbath for again granting peace.

March 26, 1539.

Grace and peace in Christ! I am afraid this letter will not find you in Frankfort ; for, from your last letter, I gathered you were longing to get away, and besides, I have almost given up hope of a general peace ensuing. Still, let the issue be what it will, I do not yet despair of our prayers being answered, and that Christ will, although contrary to a certain rumour, cause the aspect of matters at Schmalkalden and your own dream to be realised, in spite of our having grieved God in many ways, and very specially through ingratitude and contempt of His Word.

And further, our farmers without cause seem determined to starve us to death. The malignity of our corn-dealers in concealing the grain has already driven most of our students away. Is there no police to preserve order in the land? You know the prevailing anarchy, which opens the door for the most unbridled lawlessness, which through time it may be impossible to stem. But my

greatest sorrow is to see the beautiful university being gradually dispersed. May Christ crush Satan! Your family is well.

Dr. Jonas is again prostrate with his old malady. I commend you to Christ. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXXV

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK OF SAXONY

Luther asks the Elector's aid in the unexpected famine. A "corner" had been created in grain.

April 9, 1539.

Grace and peace in Christ, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! This land has been visited by a sudden famine, so that we are compelled to seek help and counsel from your Grace, as the lord and father of the land. Doubtless your Electoral Highness knows the exact amount of the provisions in the town. But at present Wittenberg is obliged to supply the small towns of Kemberg and Schmiedeberg with bread, so that the provost declares more bread is taken out of the town than is eaten in it. And some believe that the scarcity does not proceed so much from lack of corn as from the greed and wickedness of the rich Junkers. This is giving rise to much talk, but I shall not enlarge on this. It was even said that N. N. was heard to say that he will not sell a grain of corn till he received a gulden for the bushel, and that is why the corn is being sent out of the land. But the Elbe is also to blame in preventing the corn being ground, as the mill has to stand idle because of high waters. It is a small affliction, but may become very great if your Electoral Grace do not help and advise.

Therefore we all beseech your gracious Highness not only to give prompt assistance in our present need, but to pass a law preventing the nobility from trading in corn, thereby practising usury in such a shameless manner, to the detriment of your Grace's land and people. They are rich enough without this, and it is not necessary for them, solely through greed, to slay the poor by starvation.

But your Electoral Grace will know how to act in the matter in a princely manner. I herewith commend you to the dear Lord Christ. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLXXXVI

TO MARTIN BÜCKER, SUPERINTENDENT OF STRASSBURG
CHURCHES

Luther wishes to be kept informed of the spread of the gospel.

April 16, 1539.

Grace and peace in the Lord! I think, dear Bucker, that you must see you cannot expect so many letters from me. For you have more leisure and fewer years, not to speak of the work with which I am hourly overwhelmed. Therefore I answer all your letters at once, for I flatter myself that ours is a genuine friendship, free from compulsion, and I trust that it is the same with all your co-workers, to whom I send my kindest regards. I am always delighted to hear of matters pertaining to the crucified Word. The prophecy of St. Peter is being fulfilled, "They shall utterly perish in their own corruptions."

And now they are again breathing out threatenings against us, and boast not without effect. God will render their counsels of no avail, as He has hitherto done, although our sins, ingratitude, and coldness will draw down heavy penalties. Already the winds and waters have been so tempestuous that the oldest men have never seen the like. Our Crato wished me to preface our postils, but as I have forgotten my Latin, having used German so long, I wished him to apply to you, which I now also do.

Regarding the King of England, I fear he will deceive your hopes. The English here often complain of their King, and laud the freedom we enjoy. May God guide his and the hearts of all other kings to His glory. We may believe the reports of the Emperor having had no luck since he allied himself to the God-forsaken Pope. Now we are blamed for everything.

Greet Herren John Sturm and John Calvin warmly from me, whose writings I read with great pleasure.

I wish that Saloder could be persuaded that God is also the Creator of the human race outside Italy, but it is impossible to plant this conviction in the heart of Italians, whose sole feelings in regard to others is that of proud superiority. I commend you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCLXXXVII

TO KING GUSTAVUS I. OF SWEDEN

The King asks Luther for a tutor for his son, whom he afterwards made his confidant, and raised to a high post.

April 18, 1539.

Grace and peace, Most Serene Lord and King! Herr Nicolas, your Majesty's excellent ambassador, tells me he received orders to provide a good tutor for your Majesty's young Prince. This was a great joy to me, for I thereby perceived God had endued your Majesty with a great love of piety and learning, fitting you to set an example to others. For it is necessary for kings to be either by nature more ingenious than others, or to attain to this by thorough training, so that they may see with their own eyes instead of trusting to others' opinion.

May Christ cause your Majesty's work to permeate the whole realm, especially the cathedrals, so that schools may be opened for training young people for the ministry and service of the Church in connection with them; for this is the chief and highest duty devolving upon kings who love the gospel, and your Majesty has the reputation, beyond all others, of loving righteousness. And we pray God to rule your Majesty's heart through His Spirit.

By the grace of God, most capable instructors have been selected for the Prince. Herr Norman is a man of blameless life, modest, upright, and learned, fully fitted to be the Prince's instructor, and I warmly commend him to your Majesty. Michael Agricola accompanies him as travelling companion. He was born in your Majesty's

dominions, and although young in years is very learned and sensible and of pleasing manners, and may achieve much good in your Majesty's lands. I pray that Christ may have much fruit through this man, whom I hope your Majesty will appoint to an office. May God through His Holy Spirit richly bless all your Royal Highness's deliberations and undertakings. Amen. Your Majesty's devoted
MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1290.)

CCCLXXXVIII

TO URSULA SCHNEIDERWEIN

Luther begs her to consent to her son marrying a Wittenbergerin.

June 4, 1539.

To the honoured and virtuous Frau Ursula Schneiderwein, citizen of Stolberg. Grace and peace in Christ, my gracious good friend ! I have already written you concerning your son John, who has fallen in love with an excellent maiden, and I hoped for a favourable answer ; but no attention having been paid to your son's request, I am constrained to write again, for I do not wish him to lose heart and sink into despair. But as he loves the girl so dearly, and she is quite his equal in station, besides being a gentle, quiet creature, I think you ought to be satisfied that he has shown his child-like obedience in humbling himself to ask your consent to the marriage, as Samson did ; and now do your part, as a loving mother, by giving your consent thereto. For although we have written that children should not become engaged without their parents' consent, still parents should not hinder their children from marrying those they love. The son must not bring a daughter to his parents against their will, but the father must not force a wife upon his son. They must both give way, else the son's wife becomes the father's daughter against his will. And who knows what happiness God may grant him through this maiden, a happiness which he might never experience otherwise, because the good damsel, who is in his own position, might in her distress utter an

evil (*böse*) prayer. In short, I trust you will not withhold your consent any longer, so that the good fellow may be at rest. I could wait no longer for your letter, but thought it my duty to write again. But pray do not tell your son of this letter till all is settled, in case he should become too confident and bold ; for, I love him on account of his virtues, and would not wish him to be badly advised. Therefore, do you also act like a mother, and help him out of his martyrdom, so that he may not fall into despair. I herewith commend you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCLXXXIX

TO WENZEL LINK AT NÜRNBERG

About presents, and Herzog George, who died April 17, having outlived all his family.

June 23, 1539.

Grace and peace ! Knowing how plentiful the gold guildens are with you, I am all the more delighted that the little gift I sent your wife through Herr Stromer should have accomplished its object, and appeased your wrath, and stopped your threats. Your long harangue was certainly of no avail ; still we must excuse you, just as if you had been justified in complaining of my silence.

So we might daily listen to similar declamations here, and they do as little good as the gold gulden with you, only furnishing us with material for mirth. At the same time you order me or my Käthie to say what we wish in return. If you are determined to send something, let it be a lamp, but not a common one, such as we used as monks, but one upon which two or three candles could be placed ; and let it be strong enough to stand all the knocks it may receive in cleaning, or when it is thrown downstairs, or even only sent on in advance ; or, better still, if you could find one which does not require cleaning (for you know the ways and love of ease of the servants of the day), then it would be secure against the ill-treatment of the maids when they are in the sulks or have a fit of laziness. There is nothing new here that you do not already know. I

had solemnly declared that Herzog George was not entirely vicious and God-forsaken. Certainly he was far from being as wicked as that monstrosity in Mainz. God will perfect what He has begun if we only persevere in prayer. Truly the end is near. May the Lord Christ receive our souls in peace, and thus shall be fulfilled what is written, "The righteous shall be taken away from the evil to come." Greet all your people and ours.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCXC

TO HERZOG ALBRECHT OF PRUSSIA

Another allusion to Herzog George's death.

June 23, 1539.

Grace and peace in Christ, Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord ! Although I have nothing particular to write about, I must thank your Electoral Grace for so kindly inquiring about my health through your ambassador, and thank you for your solicitude in order not to appear ungrateful or rude for your Grace's constant concern as to my welfare. There is nothing new here except that God has achieved a marvellous work in the death of Herzog George of Saxony ; for, had not God extended His protecting hand, Germany would have been plunged in misery. But now God has given peace, and slain the wicked man with his evil designs, although this striking manifestation of God's wrath has not converted him of Mainz and other bishops, whose utter ruin no entreaties or calamities can prevent. Ferdinand and the Bavarians are now beginning to persecute the gospel in earnest, otherwise things look peaceful in Germany ; but everything has been very dear, although we have now the prospect of a plentiful crop of corn and fruit. God be praised for this, and may He make us grateful. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen. Your Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXCI

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther complains of his German Bible being pirated in Leipsic.

July 8, 1539.

Grace and peace in Christ, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord ! That wicked rascal Wolrab at Leipsic (a most unscrupulous man, who ruined a splendid business as well as himself and family), who has hitherto been foremost in printing all the calumnies against us, has taken it into his head to plunder our German Bible, thereby taking the bread out of the mouths of our printers. Your Electoral Grace knows how hard it is that the rascal should be allowed to use our labour for his own advantage, especially after having profited by the publication of all manner of writings against us. I would therefore humbly request that your Grace would prevent Wolrab committing this great evil, and reaping such great advantages at the expense of your Electoral Highness's own subjects. And what particularly annoys me is that the blasphemer and pirate should have the chance of so misusing my hard labour, and perhaps turning it into ridicule at the same time. For what he merits at God's hands and ours I shall leave God to requite for his scandalous publications against us. For it would be no hardship, seeing the Leipsic printers have so long enriched themselves through these, should they for a time be prevented from doing so further, and bringing our printers to ruin. For it is easy to see that the markets being all held in Leipsic, they can sell thousands of copies easier there than our folks can sell one hundred. Your Electoral Grace will be able to devise a princely way out of this dilemma. I commit you to the dear God. Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER

(De Wette.)

CCCXCII

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther writes concerning Link's call to Leipsic.

October 26, 1539.

Grace and peace! I have received the lamp, my excellent Wenzel, and thank you for it. You have interpreted my silence aright, viz. that I would have written had the messenger come for letters. Certainly I do not wish you to give up your present post to go to Leipsic, where they are not as yet agreed about whom they wish, or as to how the servants of Christ are to be maintained. Although the common man is well inclined, the upper classes still retain their old dislike to anything pertaining to Wittenberg.

Herzog George is not yet defunct in spirit, and it is uncertain if he will ever die. I detest this Sodom, a sink of vice, but one must stretch out a helping hand, if it were only to rescue one Lot. Enough is being done for the people of the town, and thus far the gospel is spreading most satisfactorily.

A kind of epidemic is beginning to rage among us. As yet the town is not affected, only one or two houses having been visited. But it has now attacked the third house, after no death having taken place for eight days. And this is Dr. Sebald's house, whose wife died to-night, and he too is in great danger. But the terror occasioned by the visitation is the worst plague of all. Neither bathers nor nurses are to be had. I am certain the devil has entered into the people, filling them with such disgraceful terror that brother forsakes brother, and the son the parents. Doubtless this is the punishment for the contempt of the gospel and their consuming greed. I have brought the Sebald's four children into my house. Good God! what a fearful outcry is being raised against me. Pray for us with your congregation, and farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCXCIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

After Herzog George's death his brother, Herzog Henry, invited Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, Cruciger, and Myconius to come and further the work in Leipsic. They did so, the two latter remaining for a time. Eventually Cruciger's daughter married Luther's son Johannes.

November 4, 1539.

Grace and peace in Christ, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! The Leipsic Town Council has written us begging that Dr. Cruciger may remain, which he has promised to do should we consent, so the Council hopes your Electoral Grace will grant their desire at my request. We wrote saying we could neither promote nor hinder the matter, so it now lies with your Highness to decide. But as Dr. Caspar knew no other way of protecting himself against this people's persistent importunity than by referring them to us, he writes that he would far rather be here; and we are certain he could be far more useful here, as there are many more who, by the grace of God, have been trained in our schools who are waiting to be sent out to all lands than there are, or will be, for many a long day in Leipsic. Therefore, feeling sure that Dr. Caspar cannot accomplish as much in Leipsic as in Wittenberg, we think it a pity he should leave so much undone here and achieve so little there, and that little could be as well done by some one not nearly so important; and our university must not be left destitute, especially as I have arranged that Dr. Caspar should fill my place in the theological department after my death. I therefore humbly request (for it all rests with your Electoral Grace) that you will not permit Dr. Caspar to leave Wittenberg, for who knows what God may do shortly. Your Electoral Highness will graciously excuse my expressing my opinion thus freely on this subject. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXCIV

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH

Concerning private communion.

November 26, 1539.

To Anton Lauterbach, Bishop at Pirna. Grace and peace! As to administering the sacrament to the sick, dear Anton, you can read that for yourself in our Church Service, which you know so well. For my part I wish private communion were completely done away with everywhere, and that the people should be told in the preaching to communicate three or four times a year, to partake of the consolations of the gospel, and fall asleep whenever God calls them. For this administration of the sacrament will, with time, become impossible, especially during the plague. And it is not seemly that the Church should serve the people with the communion as a servant waits upon her master, especially those who have so long despised it, and then demand it at the end from her, whom they have never served.

But till this matter is settled, do the best you can. Meantime only dispense it to the sick people, but let it thoroughly be understood that it will not continue. For we must soon come to an arrangement in this matter.

WITTENBERG.

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—Käthie wishes the carved house door made according to the measurements sent. The master will take the length and breadth himself. She wishes no other door. Do the best you can.

(Walch, 21. 1193).

CCCXCV

TO HIS SISTER DOROTHEA

Luther announces he will preach at Rossla.

December 2, 1539.¹

To Frau Dorothea, Herr Balthaser Mackenrothen's beloved wife, at Rossla.

¹ Date disputed, as it seems unlikely the gospel should never have been preached in this Saxon village. In 1526 or 1527 an earnest Catholic priest preached the gospel in Lower Rossla, so 1526 is a more probable date.

Dear Sister—I see from your letter how earnestly your burdened conscience longs for a gospel sermon of consolation, and that you wish to hear for once such a sermon in your Rossla church. I am delighted to hear this, and have now resolved—God granting me life and health—to be with you on Christmas Eve, when I shall, with God's help, preach the first Evangelical sermon at Rossla as a remembrance for you all. Greet your husband and the little Margareta, for whom I shall bring something. I commit you to God.

AT EISLEBEN.
(De Wette.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCXCVI

TO THE ELECTOR JOACHIM OF BRANDENBURG

Luther gives his opinion of the Church Constitution compiled by Buchholzer on the introduction of the Reformation into Brandenburg in 1539.

December 4, 1539.

Grace and peace in Christ, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene and High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! I have received your Electoral Highness's embassy with great pleasure, and thank the Father of all grace, and pray earnestly that the dear God may graciously perfect His good work in you to His honour and glory. For Satan will try to hinder the good work, which he has already attempted with us. I am delighted with your Electoral Highness's preface to the aforesaid document, but there is one point I object to, viz. about processions, extreme unction, and the sacrament, upon which I have given my opinion to your Grace's messengers. To carry the sacrament in one kind in the procession is only mocking God, for, as you know, it is only a half—indeed no sacrament. But should it be carried about in both kinds, that is still worse, and will give the Papists occasion for ridicule. So I humbly request that, as your Electoral Highness has so far defied the devil in these grand articles, you would let those minor matters rest, so that the devil may not make a laughing-stock of the whole Reformation. We might permit extreme unction and

taking the sacrament to the sick, if not done according to Papal usage. Seeing your Electoral Highness lays so much stress on these matters, I would humbly suggest that although they may be retained for a time, they should not be embodied in the tenets of the Reformation and printed. For, as the preface declares, it is a Reformation grounded on the Bible, and on the usages of the purified Church. For from early times the Church usages became most corrupt. For Christ did not make anointing with oil a sacrament, nor do St. James's words apply to the present day. For in those days the sick were often cured through a miracle and the earnest prayer of faith, as we see in James and Mark vi. The carrying of the sacrament to the sick, although continued, must not be imperative or put in print. For it is of human institution, and not God's command, so it can be retained till a better way is found. Also that the sacrament must be taken from the altar in the mass, and not put in the ciborium. I have told the rest to your embassy. I herewith commend you to the dear faithful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and pray for you. Your Electoral Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXCVII

TO GEORGE BUCHHOLZER, PROVOST IN BERLIN

On the same subject. To this day the white surplice is often worn in the Nicolai and Marien churches, the oldest in Berlin.

December 4, 1539.

To the esteemed Herr Georgio Buchholzer, my dear brother in Christ, grace and peace through Christ! Dear Herr Provost—I cannot write much because of the weakness of my head. You will see from the letters what we think of the form of Church government of your Elector, my most gracious lord. In regard to the things of which you complain, the cowl and surplice in the procession on feast days, and the walking round the churchyard on Sundays and at Easter, etc. etc., this is my advice: If your lord, the Margrave and Elector,

allows you to preach the gospel of Christ purely, without man's additions, and permits the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper according to Christ's appointment, and does not insist upon the worshipping of the saints as mediators and intercessors, and the carrying of the host in the procession, nor upon daily masses for the dead, nor holy water nor responses and songs, Latin and German in the processions, then in God's name go round with them, carrying a silver or gold cross, and cowl or surplice of velvet, silk, or linen. And if one of these be not enough, then put on three, as did Aaron, the High Priest, each one more beautiful than another, from which church vestments in the Papacy are named *Ornata*. And if your lord the Elector be not satisfied with one procession, then go round seven times, as Joshua went round Jericho with the children of Israel blowing trumpets, and if your lord has any desire let him go on in front, springing and dancing with harps and cymbals, drums and bells, as did David when they brought the ark of the Lord up to Jerusalem. I have no objections to that. For such things, if not abused, neither add to nor take from the gospel, but they must never be regarded as necessary nor made a matter of conscience. As to the elevation of the elements in the Mass, this too is an open question when nothing is added thereto, so in God's name raise them as long as you like. We in Wittenberg had good reasons for making an end of the custom—reasons which may not exist in Berlin. And we shall not again begin it, for it is a free thing and not ordered by God, for God's command alone is necessary. Your lord's messengers will give you all further news. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose servant you are, will support you by His Spirit, and see that His name be glorified, His kingdom come, and His will be done. For this I pray daily. Thursday after St. Andrew's Day.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

1540

A Congress of Evangelical Princes was held in Schmalkalden in March, to which the Elector, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Jonas, and Cruciger went. Melanchthon was present at Landgrave Philip's marriage on March 4. The Emperor arranged a conference of Roman Catholic and Protestant Princes in Hagenau. Melanchthon dangerously ill on his way thither. Protestants at Hagenau would not listen to the proposed union between the conflicting parties, so another conference was held at Worms in October. Calvin, then resident in Strassburg, was present at both conferences.

CCCXCVIII

TO CHANCELLOR BRÜCK

Luther wishes the Prince to remedy a crying scandal.¹

January 3, 1540.

Grace and peace ! I hoped, dear sir, to have had you with us at the feast, so instead must send you a petition, begging you to plead with my gracious lord that he would forbid the nobility acting as they do towards those for whom they stand bail in his lands. It is a disgrace that such oppression and robbery should be permitted in the public inns under princely protection, where the nobles behave so abominably, devouring all that comes in their way. It is said that four nobles, through riotous living in the inns, have squeezed 300 gulden out of Martin List for a debt of 30 florins. How much better would it have been had each given a few florins and set poor Martin free ! What devil has given such power to the nobility to plunder thus ? If the Princes do not punish this, God will surely punish them, along with us. I think of publishing a pamphlet on the matter, and addressing it to the Princes. But my writing is of little use if you do not diligently prevent this from your exalted position. In how many ways can the devil injure us ? If the Turk do not swallow us up, or the pestilence sweep us away, or the Emperor consume us, then we devour and ruin one

¹ When debtors did not pay, it was the custom for those who stood bail to live in the inns till the debt was paid at the debtor's expense.

another through greed and usury. God have mercy on us, and if not, then may the day of judgment dawn. Amen. I commit you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCXCIX

TO JOACHIM II. OF BRANDENBURG

Petition to permit export of purchased corn.

January 7, 1540.

To the Most Serene High-born Prince Joachim, Elector of Brandenburg.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, most gracious Elector and lord! We humbly desire to let your Grace know that the church here did its utmost during the great scarcity to buy corn for the poor, and those deputed to do this had to visit many places. But when at length the excellent Dietrich von Rochau had secured 21 Wispel (Medlar) for our church and the poor, he was given to understand that your Grace would graciously permit it to be taken out of your land. Although we now know that your Electoral Highness has interdicted this on account of the exigences of your own domains, yet we venture humbly to plead that this statute may be modified, or perhaps entirely set aside, in regard to your nearest neighbours for the sake of the poor in their dire need, even as Joseph, in the great famine in the East, distributed corn not only to the Egyptians, but to those of other lands. And Solomon says that people shall curse him who withholdeth corn, but blessings shall be upon the head of him that selleth it, which saying all should call to remembrance at this time, and act upon it, so that God may bless us by giving us once more a plentiful year, and by feeding His poor abundantly; for, we are told that God giveth to the beast his food and to the young ravens which cry. So we must pray earnestly that God may have pity on the poor, and for their sakes send an abundant harvest. Therefore we trust your Electoral Grace may show yourself graciously disposed towards the poor

in those dear times, and grant the petition we are compelled to present, viz. that permission may be granted to Dietrich von Rochau to export the corn he has purchased. God will surely reward this according to His promise. And we shall earnestly beseech God to prosper and bless your Electoral Highness. Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTINUS LUTHER.

JUSTUS JONAS.

JOHANNES POMMERANUS.

PHILIPPUS MELANCHTHON.

(De Wette.)

CCCC

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK OF SAXONY

Topics to be discussed at Schmalkalden sent to the Elector.

January 18, 1540.

Grace and peace in Christ, and my poor paternoster ! We herewith send your Electoral Grace our opinions, by which we shall abide. For things have come to a desperate pass with the Papists, even as with their god, the devil. They sin knowingly against the truth, viz. the Holy Ghost, so one can neither hope nor pray for them. . . . I would gladly go to Eisenach with our people on their way to Schmalkalden, but I do not see that I would be of any use. It would only cause fruitless trouble and expense ; but I am ready to do what your Grace wishes, although it would matter little if I closed my eyes once for all and never again beheld the world in its blasphemous fury. God be praised, surely Philip and Dr. Jonas are quite capable of dealing with these things. I did not think it necessary to call the members of the league (Schmalkaldischen) together again, for matters might have been satisfactorily arranged otherwise. Hoping my advice will meet with your Grace's approval, I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen. Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCI

TO THE LEARNED JUSTUS JONAS, POMMER, AND PHILIP

February 26, 1540.

This is the second letter I have written you, and did I not hope that your answer was on its way hither, I would be very angry at your long silence, for it seems as if you had been long enough away to be back again. We hear the Diet has been postponed, therefore some of your folks have been expecting you for two days. God be praised, all are well here, only your daughter, my Philip, gave us a fright, as she seemed very ill for some hours. For Fama, this sorceress, grows as it spreads. We had two days' sunshine, and then the bad weather returned, but the Elbe is getting smaller. It is well I did not accompany you, for I got no sleep last night from pain in the muscles of the arm between the shoulder and the elbow. I do not know what it can be, for it does not pain me even if I strike it. I fancy it is the tooth of the serpent, which will not let me bend the arm. I often think of Hans Reinecke, who, before his death, complained of numbness in the arm. Nevertheless, if wanted, I shall appear among you, for otherwise I feel pretty well, and my Käthie's appetite is returning, and she is creeping round the tables and chairs with her hands. May you prosper in the Lord ; pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCII

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH, SUPERINTENDENT IN PIRNA

The great indifference to the good cause at Dresden.

March 3, 1540.

Grace and peace in Christ ! I see clearly, my Anton, the astounding indifference which prevails at the Court of Dresden to the cause of God and man. Pride and greed seem to reign there. The old Prince can do little, and the

young ones are powerless. May God Himself govern His churches till He finds good instruments to do it. There is nothing new here, except the mad pamphlet of Mezentius against the allied Princes. The Turk is making gigantic preparations, but we dine and amuse ourselves nevertheless. The Emperor, Francis, and Ferdinand are banquetting in Flanders. One must pray that the day of God's glorious appearing may soon dawn. Yea, come Lord Jesus! Amen. My Käthie has recovered in the most marvellous manner from the jaws of death, and is now learning to walk. It is manifestly the work of God. She sends kind greetings to you and your Agnes and Elizabeth. Farewell, and pray for us, as we do for you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCIII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther excuses the Emperor's indecision.

April 8, 1540.

Grace and peace! You write, dear Philip, that the Emperor has promised a private conference, and I wonder much what it signifies. I believe he does not know himself what to undertake. His heart must have many secret recesses, being placed among so many vipers, which makes it impossible for him to satisfy either party. I often think what I would do were I in the hands of such people. One must pray to God for him. It is truly a marvellous miracle that God has restrained the Emperor's hand for so long, although the bishops and cardinals have been embittering and stirring him up against us, and for this we ought to thank God. But whatever aspect matters may assume, we can achieve all through prayer. This alone is the almighty queen of human destiny. Therewith we can accomplish everything, and thus maintain what already exists, amend what is defective, patiently put up with the inevitable, overcome what is evil, and preserve all that is good. But the Papists, those despicable creatures, know not what prayer can achieve. For

they cannot repent, having stained their hands with Christ's blood. For although we poor sinners are still living in the sinful flesh, still we are pure from blood, and hate those bloody men and the god of blood who has them in bondage. I have received your letters, and hope you will receive some. Greet all our people, and say their households are well. We pray for you, and believe we shall be heard. I wish you were home. Your obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCIV

TO ONE UNKNOWN

In *Social Germany in Luther's Time* we learn that the recipient of this letter was Nicolas Sastrow, who, because of the *Bruser-Leveling* lawsuit, had for many years absented himself from the communion table.

April 14, 1540.

Your dear son, Magister Johannes, after expressing his sorrow at your having kept away so long from the holy communion, which absence is a bad example, requested me to rescue you from that dangerous path. Not one hour of our lives really belongs to ourselves. His filial solicitude, therefore, induced me to send you these lines. Let me, therefore, exhort you in a Christian, brotherly fashion, as is my duty, to change your mind, and consider that God's Son, whose sufferings were so much greater, forgave His executioners. Remember that, at your last hour, you will have to forgive, even as a thief on the gallows forgives. Await the decision of the court, before which your suit is pending, but never forget that nothing should prevent you participating in the Holy Supper. Were it otherwise, I myself and our Princes would require to keep away from the Lord's Supper till our differences with the Papists were settled. Leave the lawyers to arrange matters, and meantime appease your conscience thus, saying: "It is the judges' place to decide who is right, so meanwhile I forgive those who have wronged me, and shall partake of the Holy Communion." Thus you do not approach the table unworthily, for, con-

sidering yourself wronged, you have appealed to the law, and are willing to abide by its decision. Nothing can be more simple. Pray take this admonition, prompted by your son, in a friendly spirit. I commit you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCV

TO GRAF ALBRECHT OR ALBERT VON MANSFELD

Luther intercedes for his brother-in-law.

May 24, 1540.

Grace and peace in Christ, most gracious lord ! It is long since I asked for anything, but in case the highway of intercession should become overgrown with grass, I now approach you, humbly begging your Grace to listen to me, so that I may not be suspected of having incurred your displeasure, which I do not think I have deserved. Lately I was at Court, where I do not care to go, and, among other things, I heard that your Grace was treating the proprietors of the smelting-houses very harshly, who do not deserve this at your hands, and that, in consequence, the earldom might forfeit its prosperity ; and much was being said on the subject which I do not think it right to conceal from you. I then asked how it affected my relations, and I was told that my brother-in-law, Mackerode, feared he would be reduced to beggary. "God cannot desire that," I said, "for they have nothing but the furnace they inherited, so I shall write my lord on the subject" ; for, my brother-in-law has not written to me about it, only it occurred to me at Court that I once called him in jest a dross-driver instead of a furnace-master (*Schlackentreiber* for *Schlackenherren*), at which he laughed, and said the time might not be far distant when such would be the case, and went away.

Therefore I plead, most gracious lord, that you will grant my petition, and prove a gracious lord to the good Mackerode and his heirs, especially as your Grace must see that so great and rich a lord can gain nothing through the poverty of good people, but would most surely draw down

God's wrath upon him, to whom it is a very small matter to make the rich poor and the poor rich. I do not plead for justice (as I neither know nor wish to know the rights of the case), but for your favour, for your Grace also needs God's favour and protection. For if we insist too much on our rights regarding our neighbours, without leaving room for mercy, then God will act in the same manner towards us, and mercy will be obscured. I hope my lord will see from this letter that I truly love my sovereign Prince, and have his welfare at heart, therefore dislike hearing anything to his disadvantage, or be silent when I fear God may pour out His wrath upon him. I beg for a gracious answer. I commit you to God. Amen. Your Grace's most obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCVI

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH

Luther asks help for a preacher with a bad wife.

June 15, 1540.

Grace and peace! George Schaumer, for whom you have got a church, asks a letter of introduction to you. But he has a very bad wife. If she remains here, and does not follow her husband, as she threatens to do, we shall give her a bath in the Elbe, or dignify her with an admonition. Should she really follow, you will treat her as befits your office, most decidedly, thus coming to the man's help. And should she run away, all the better, for he will get rid of the godless woman. See to it that she does not injure the gospel nor unfit her husband for the pulpit. Here nothing is talked of except the strange story of the Landgrave, which some excuse, others deny, while some give it a quite different aspect. The sister of the Landgrave, the Princess of Röchlitz, is much blamed; but time will declare it. Farewell, and pray for us, and let your church plead the cause of the gospel, now being discussed at Hagenau, and for M. Philip, who has been sent into the midst of the enemy, that God may give His angels charge over him, and keep him in all his ways.

Amen. He set off very sad and depressed. May the Lord comfort him. My wife sends greetings. The Bible for Magister Latomus¹ is waiting, but I have no one to take it to him. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCVII

TO JOHN LANGE

Luther promises to bring Melanchthon on a visit. Melanchthon nearly died at Weimar on the way to Hagenau, and was restored mainly through Luther's presence and prayers.

July 2, 1540.

Grace and peace! Now then look for us, dear Lange, either on Sunday or Monday. For it has been arranged that we should sup at Erfurt, if God will. Philip comes with us. We travel straight to Hagenau to see perhaps for the last time that terrible Behemoth with which I have had to deal, more or less, for twenty years, and over which He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, which they cannot understand till the awful conclusion of the Psalm is fulfilled in them. "They shall perish when His wrath is kindled but a little," because they do not pay homage to the Son. Amen. So let it be! They deserved what they have got. Farewell, and pray for us. Philip is rather low after his severe illness. He was almost dead. Through a miracle of God he now lives. Farewell.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCVIII

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

Written on the way to Eisenach to meet the Elector and Landgrave Philip to discuss the latter's double marriage.

July 2, 1540.

Grace and peace, my dear Käthie! I wish you to know that I am well. I eat like a Bohemian and drink like a German, for which God be thanked. Amen.

¹ Professor in Louvain.

The reason for this is that Philip was verily dead, and, like Lazarus, has been raised from the dead. God, the dear Father, hears our prayers. This we can understand, although often we do not believe it. I have written to Dr. Pommer that the Count of Schwarzburg wishes a pastor for Greussen, so you might, like a clever lady and doctress, confer with Herr George Major and M. Ambrosio, to see which of the three whom I mentioned to Pommer could be persuaded to go. It is not a bad living, but do you be clever and make it better. I have received the children's letters with that of Baccalarien (who is no child), but nothing from your Grace, therefore I trust you will answer the four letters all at once with your gracious hand. I herewith send the silver apple to Paul, the gift of your hand, which, as I said before, you must divide among the children, and ask how many cherries and apples they would take for it, and pay them in ready money, and keep the stem. Say to our dear boarders, particularly Dr. Schiefer, with my love, that I hope they will look after everything connected with churches, schools, and house, and wherever necessary. Also I trust M. Major and M. Ambrosio will be a comfort to you in the house. And, God willing, we shall leave Weimar on Sunday for Eisenach, and bring Philip with us. I commit you to God. Say to Wolf that he must attend to the mulberries, and not idle his time away, and draw the wine away at the proper time. Let all be joyful and pray. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER, THY WELL-BELOVED.

WEIMAR.

CCCCIX

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

Luther in Eisenach. The Elector would not allow him to go to Hagenau, but sent Cruciger and Myconius. Calvin was also present.

July 16, 1540.

Grace and peace, dear Käthie! Your Grace must know that, God be praised, we are here fresh and well, eat like the Bohemians, drink like the Germans, but in

moderation, and are full of joy. For our gracious lord of Magdeburg, Bishop Amsdorf, is our neighbour at table. Our only news is that Caspar (Cruciger), Menius, and Myconius have left Hagenau for Strassburg to pass the time. M. Philip is again all right. God be praised. Say to my dear Dr. Schiefer¹ that his King Ferdinand will have an outcry raised against him, as he seems to wish the Turk to stand sponsor to the Evangelical Princes. I hope this may not be true. It would be too gross. Write and say if you got all I sent you, such as the ninety florins I sent through Wolf Paermann. I commit you to God. Let the children pray. The heat and drought here are almost unbearable, day and night. The Bishop of Magdeburg sends you his compliments.

THY BELOVED MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCX

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

July 26, 1540.

To the wealthy lady of Zulsdorf, Frau Doctoress Katherine. Luther, wandering in spirit in Zulsdorf! God willing, we shall start for Wittenberg to-morrow. The Hagenau conference has turned out a farce, all the worry, trouble, and expense being in vain; still, if we have done nothing more, we have drawn Herr Philip out of hell, and shall bring him home with joy, as it were out of the grave. Amen. The devil is very busy. More than a thousand acres of wood belonging to my gracious lord has been set on fire in the Thuringian Forest, and to-day we hear that the wood near Werder has begun to burn, and no water can extinguish it. This will make wood very dear. Pray, and ask all to pray against Satan, who not only assails soul and body, but fiercely assaults our possessions and our honour. Christ will come from heaven and kindle a fire against Satan and his emissaries. Amen. Being uncertain where you are I do not write of other things. Greet our children, boarders, and all.

THY BELOVED MARTIN LUTHER.

¹ Once tutor to King Ferdinand's sons.

CCCCXI

TO CASPAR GÜTEL

Epidemic in Wittenberg. Agricola invited to Berlin by the Elector Joachim. He became Court preacher there.

September 3, 1540.

Grace and peace, honoured Herr Doctor and Pastor ! Although I am overwhelmed with work, being a frail old man, still I am doing duty for Pastor Johann Pommer, who is ill. Nearly all are ill here, including Dr. Jonas and Dr. Cruciger. In my house alone ten are lying dangerously ill. This fever produces wonderful effects. Epilepsy seizes many, but carries few away. M. Grickel¹ is doing the praiseworthy work of law and image-breaker. He slipped away secretly to the Margrave, thus abusing the Prince's confidence. The tree is known by its fruits. The faithless, abandoned man will indulge his wrath by telling all manner of lies against me there. May you prosper in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

CCCCXII

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther's wife wishes Spalatin's mediation regarding a present of wood.

November 10, 1540.

Grace and peace ! That which my wife talked to you about when you were here lately, she is most anxious should be granted. She begs you to hand the addressed letter to your Prince's functionary, and arrange that she should receive good and useful wood, particularly stems of oak, so that one may not (as often happens) have cause to regret receiving the Prince's present because of the officials' niggardliness, sending useless wood.

God desires that all of us, especially the servants of the Word, may be maintained in a liberal manner.

So let the treasurer know that she would like the

¹ Agricola.

branches, not the brushwood, but the thicker stems which belong to the officials, and these she would gladly purchase from the treasurer.

She wishes them for the fireplaces in her new property of Zulsdorf.

But you know far more of these matters than I, therefore you will faithfully discharge this commission.

We shall pay what is requisite, so that the new proprietress may have her kingdom suitably equipped. Farewell. I enclose the new pamphlet against the Brunswick people. There is nothing new here, not even any news from Worms.

Once more may you and yours prosper!

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXIII

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH

The conference of Roman Catholic and Protestant delegates which discussed Church union at Worms was as barren of results as that of Hagenau had been. Calvin was present there also.

November 27, 1540.

Grace and peace! My wife had left for her new possession before your letter came, so I must thank you, my Anton, instead for the cheese. But I am not greatly enamoured of that kind of cheese, being pleased with our own simple cheese, made of the commonest material, so you need not take so much trouble on our behalf.

It is sufficient that we enjoy your goodwill, of which we can take advantage when necessary, and do so perhaps too often.

We have heard no more from Worms, except that a great number of learned people from France, Spain, and Germany have met, and Philip writes that for no other Papal council have such extensive preparations been made. What may further take place God knows. If the Emperor means honestly, as we presume he does, this gathering, without being dignified by the name of Council, may turn out to be a true provincial Council, under the appellation of a special Conference, so that the Pope may

not feel insulted at the name of Council failing. He has meanwhile appointed the Bishop of Valitra (Thomas Campegius) as his legate, whom our people will neither acknowledge as judge nor as president, even were the Pope himself present, for they have been forbidden so to do. Let us pray, pray ! And let all pray. For it appears as if a great crisis were imminent.

May all go well with you and yours. Written in great haste, and overwhelmed with work.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1474.)

CCCCXIV

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther had little hope of a happy termination to the Worms Conference. He was busy revising the Bible, but was often interrupted by illness, from which he suffered during this winter.

December 7, 1540.

Grace and peace ! I was sorry, my Philip, to hear you had not received my letters. But you are not ignorant of the Court and its ways, nor yet of Satan. I fully believed that you had altogether four letters written with my own hand since you went to Worms, only, on account of my indolence and my advancing years, they were all addressed to you to save trouble.

Your last letter came to hand yesterday, which contained an account of Granvelle's speech, also of the articles you were asked to supply, which seem most Christian, and not difficult to accede to ; and, last of all, our answer. I had great delight over the folly of the devil, or rather in Christ's mighty power, which forced these people to undertake so foolish a cause. If I ever indulged any hope as to the result of this conference, for which such vast preparations were made, such hopes have now completely vanished. What should be done ? Everything that those who seem possessed of the devil do, assuming to themselves a majesty—nay, seeking to surround themselves with an almost angelic glitter—will only precipitate their fall. But He will give you His Spirit, as He has promised,

for it is not you who speak. We are praying here, and hope the conference will melt into water for them.

We have received the Imperial proclamation, and have ordered it to be printed, that the world may learn the Emperor's will. At the first glance I really thought it was forged in order to complicate this discussion. But it is more injurious to Satan himself than to us. For he must feel that nothing has been invented, but that everything is true which has been said against him.

Come, Lord Jesus! Amen. For Thine enemies tremble before the breath of Thy nostrils. Hasten Thy glorious appearing. Amen. Here they will not cease punishing the incendiaries. And, by the grace of God, Hans von Wolfenbüttel is more and more hated. You need have no anxiety regarding your household, for all are well. We send you the printed confession of the Englishman, Robert Barnes. May the Lord bring you back speedily and in good health. For you will never achieve anything there, no matter how strong you may be in Christ Jesus. For out of that wilderness and abyss you cannot make fruitful soil. Let it remain a wilderness. In Christ we can accomplish all, and do even greater things than He does, but in the devil we can do nothing. Therefore we leave him alone.

I hope that you and Caspar¹ have run your eye over the New Testament. We ventured to send Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, and Jeremiah to the printer without you. You will scarcely find any of Ezekiel, for, as you are aware, I turned ill over him just as I had begun it, and perhaps this will happen again if you do not speedily return.

Farewell, and greet all our people. My wife Käthie sends friendly greetings. She is brewing Wittenberg beer with which to regale you on your return. The Lord be with you! Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

¹ Cruciger.

1541

The discussion at Worms began on January 14, 1541. Eck and Melancthon represented the two parties, but the Emperor, who stood urgently in need of help against the Turks, broke it up in four days. It was resumed, April 27, at Regensburg. Melancthon, Cruciger, Bucer, and J. Pistorius represented the Protestants. The Pope despatched Cardinal Contarini as his legate—a superior man; but all efforts to come to an agreement proved abortive, and the Regensburg Interim was rejected.

The Reformation was now making rapid progress in Halle, which was near Albrecht of Mayence's favourite residence Magdeburg. Dr. Jonas had been preaching there, and had introduced the sacrament under both forms among the laity. It was here, too, that Winkler had preached, whose blood, Luther often said, cried to heaven for vengeance.

CCCCXV

TO FRIEDRICH MYCONIUS

Myconius had just returned from Leipsic. He had been overworked, and wrote to Luther, his dearest friend on earth, in his weakness. This is Luther's answer. Long after, Myconius wrote that the effect of this letter was magical. Myconius survived Luther and was a comfort to many.

January 9, 1541.

To the honoured Friedrich, Bishop of the Church in Gotha and of the Thuringian Churches, my beloved brother. Grace and peace in Christ! I have received your letter, my dear Herr Friedrich, in which you say you are sick unto death, or, to express it in a more Christian manner, sick unto life. Although it is a great joy to me that you are able to look forward so peacefully and fearlessly to death, which, according to the Scriptures, is not a death, but a sweet sleep to the saints—nay, that you have a great longing to depart and be with Christ, in which frame of mind we believers should always be not only upon a sick-bed, but in perfect health, as beseemeth Christians who have been made alive again with Christ, and placed with Him in heavenly places, who will be the Judge of the angels, till all that remains to be done is the

drawing aside of the veil of separation and of the dark world. Although it is a great joy to hear all this, still I beg and plead with the Lord Jesus, our Life, Salvation, and Health, that He will not permit this misfortune to overtake me, that I should live to see you get in advance of me by the veil being pushed aside and you entering into rest, leaving me behind in an evil world, the prey of wild beasts and devils, from whom I have suffered enough for over twenty years, to merit being released before all of you, and allowed to fall asleep in the Lord. Therefore I plead that the dear God would smite me with illness instead of you, and command me to lay aside this weary, worn-out frame, which can henceforth benefit no one. I earnestly admonish you to join us in imploring the dear God, for the good of His Church and the discomfiture of Satan, to maintain you in life. For Christ, our Life, also sees what manner of persons and gifts His Church now and then requires.

After waiting five weeks we have received letters from Worms, some of which George Rörer will send you. God be praised our party is doing everything in a wise, straightforward way, while our opponents are acting foolishly and childishly, full of cunning and lies, from which we may gather that Satan, seeing the approach of dawn, wriggles into a thousand corners, seeking refuge in subterfuge and lies, but all in vain, for glory, power, and victory belong to the Lamb who was slain and rose again. We hope our people may soon return from Worms. May all go well with you, my dear Friedrich, and may the Lord not permit me to hear that you are dead, but allow you to survive me.

This shall be my petition, this is my desire, and my will shall be done. Amen. For my will seeks the honour of the Divine name, and not my own honour and pleasure. Once more farewell in the Lord. We pray earnestly for you. My Kätie greets you, she, like all of us, being much distressed at your illness.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXVI

TO PRINCE WOLFGANG OF ANHALT

Luther wishes him joy on representing the Elector at Regensburg.

March 12, 1541.

To his Serene Highness Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt. Grace and peace in Christ our Lord! I was delighted to hear that your Grace requested our prayers on your journey, and doubt not that He who put this desire in your heart will grant it. For King Solomon's prayer was well pleasing to God, in that he asked for wisdom, and not for riches and such-like, and God granted his desire, and gave him all other things in addition. So we, too, shall hover in spirit in Regensburg, and Christ, as is His wont, shall reign among His enemies. For, unworthy as we may be of such a cause, it must be a good and righteous one, for it is God's own cause, and not ours. Is He then likely to forsake it? For God cannot be the losing party, so at length we shall conquer with Him. These words are ever true: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also," etc.; so in this promise we shall trust. I thank your Grace for the goblet, and commit you to the dear God, whose legate you now are. May He give you the heart to know this, and then you will be full of joy. For it has always been my comfort that the cause I conduct is not my own, but God's, who has angels enough to uphold me; or if they forsake me here, they will look far better after me up there. Amen. Your obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXVII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Philip Melanchthon met with an accident on his way to Regensburg, and wrote very dejectedly to Luther.

April 12, 1541.

Grace and peace! My dear Philip—We received your letter, and although very sorry to hear of your right arm

being broken, we shall not believe it to be an evil omen either for you or me. Our cause cannot be the sport of chance, but is under the guidance of God, and not under our control. The Word flees and prayer becomes more earnest, while hope endures and faith at length conquers, so that if we were not flesh we could sleep in peace, pondering Moses' words : "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." For although we might act with all vigilance, still all would be in vain if God did not fight for us. All is well in your home, so do not worry, for God is near. Let Henry (the Eighth), the Bishops, nay, even the Turks and the devil incarnate, do what they will, we are the children of the Kingdom ; and although scorned by the said Henry, we look for the appearing of the slain Saviour, whom we highly honour. Farewell, and pray for us, as we do for you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCXVIII

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Luther warns his friend against poison.

April 21, 1541.

Grace and peace ! To-day, April 21, I received your letters, dearest Philip—fourteen in all—with the joyful tidings of the Emperor's friendly sentiments. May God perfect what He has begun. I have always forgotten to remind you to be on your guard at banquets. Dreadful stories are going about regarding poisoners. It was discovered that the medicine in Erfurt and also the seasonings were poisoned. In Altenburg twelve persons at one table swallowed poison contained in the different dishes, and died therefrom. The devil also sends his poison-mixers to Jena and elsewhere. I wonder that the great are not more on their guard against Satan.

Through the grace of God all goes well here. Dr. Jonas preached in Halle during Easter, much to the annoyance of the Castle, but with the approbation of the Prince and the Town Council. I am still busy with the

books of Moses, and at the same time a martyr to a discharge in the ears, at the one moment contemplating life, and at the next death. The will of the Lord be done Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXIX

TO CASPAR CRUCIGER, DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY

On April 28 the so-called Regensburg Interim was at length placed before the Evangelicals, but not accepted. The Elector urged no half-measures in religious matters, and said even if Dr. Martin would give in, "which, God forbid, we shall not."

May 1, 1541.

Grace and peace ! I see from the fifteen articles which you have just sent me what Satan is attempting. But he may turn and twist as he will, his slippery nature has led him into captivity. Only continue to act as Christ's ambassador.

To-day we heard good news of the Emperor, which, I fancy, reached me through a letter from the Prince of Anhalt to our people. The Emperor summoned both sets of theologians into his chamber, and exhorted them to put aside all thought of their princes and all party spirit, and, looking to God alone, seek for the truth only and the welfare of the Churches and State. May God strengthen this sacred work. Amen.

I cannot write more. My hearing is gradually returning, but the head is still useless and inflated with all sorts of stormy winds, like the spirits incarcerated in Aeolus's hell. Christ lives, even as we live, amid death. Meantime I can sleep as usual and take nourishment. Perhaps Satan is in his bath for a time. Dr. Jonas has been preaching Christ in Halle for over three weeks with great blessing, and with the approbation of the people and the Mayor, although to the dissatisfaction of some.

The Mayor continues steadfast in spite of the fury of the monks and priests. What I write to you is meant for Philip also. All are well at home. May you prosper in the Lord. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXX

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Respecting affairs in Halle, and the revision of the New Testament.

May 22, 1541.

Grace and peace ! I always expect consideration from you, whether I am long in answering your letters or not.

My health is not such that I can read or write for an hour without injury. I have often tried to, being so anxious to write. Whatever my malady may have been, it was most severe. My hearing has not entirely returned, but God will do as seemeth good to Him, and I feel rather better. Regarding the Burgraviate, you say you had letters from Court. But the Prince is too prudent to interfere in Halle, as it is beyond his jurisdiction, except in the matter of the Burgraviate ; and who would advise him to do so, especially as we teach that each must attend to the things devolving on him ? And it is no small victory that the gates of hell, by the mere virtue of the aforesaid title and the shadow thereof, should be compelled to endure your presence, Jonas, the enemy of Satan and the Cardinal, in their midst.

Let us thank God for this ! Say to those timid ones to be at ease as to the alienation of their title. God, who calls into being what does not exist, will make this insignificant title great, for He makes all out of nothing. I shall be delighted to do what you ask, as I consider it my duty to pray for the Church at Halle, and even for Balthaser himself. We all wish that the Lord would make him alive.

In future do not expect such long letters from me, for to-morrow I begin to revise the New Testament. The publishers, our lords, insist upon this, for I bear about with me in my sickness the marks of the wounds of those gentlemen, the publishers. The Lord be with you, my beloved. Greet our friends in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXI

TO PHILIP MELANCHTHON

On June 9 Prince John of Anhalt, Alesius, etc., appeared before Luther by command of the Elector of Brandenburg, at the instigation of the Emperor, to induce him to permit the disputed articles to remain and an agreement to be made, but Luther was as steadfast as Melanchthon.

June 25, 1541.

Grace and peace! I shall anticipate your letter, which I daily, nay hourly, expect to receive, and rehearse what happened in Regensburg, viz. that you were summoned before the Emperor, who proposed that you should do your utmost at the conference for the restoration of unity. In a Latin harangue you declared you would do your best, but felt yourself powerless for so difficult a task.

But Eck, as is his habit, cried out, "Most Gracious Emperor, I shall maintain that our party is right, and that the Pope is the head of the Church!" This is all that happened.

From Cruciger's last letter to Magister George I saw that you and he are to meet the day after to-morrow. I rejoice that Mayence¹ shall be extinguished. There is a great outcry here over the rumour that 5,000 Turks have been killed at Ofen. I have no more news.

I again begin to hear by degrees, although my dead ear still sometimes refuses to perform its functions, and the discharge in my head and the phlegm cause me much uneasiness, but I always was, and shall ever remain, a rheumatic man, a martyr to all sorts of catarrh. My Käthie greets you respectfully. Love to all our friends.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

About the Greek chair and assistance for Melanchthon.

August 3, 1541.

Grace and peace in Christ, Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! It is not easy to fill the vacant

¹ The Archbishop.

chair, and the gentlemen of the University say they would rather give it to M. Veit, not because M. Sachse is not worthy of it, but because M. Veit is older, and has done more for education here than any one except M. Philip. Now all this is true, and M. Holstein (Sachse) did not ask for the chair, not wishing to push himself forward before M. Veit, and he would have been satisfied with M. Fach's post, which I asked for him at first.

It is an unfortunate business, as your Grace will soon see.

But you tell me that Philip will not give up the Greek class, for he is eager to serve the University, so that the salary for the Greek chair will revert to the University, and thus save the salary, your Grace having given him a hundred florins additional on the new foundation.

M. Philip is so just and modest that he will not accept this addition unless he teach Greek, so that your Grace and the University may not be burdened with this money on his behalf. So it now depends on your Electoral Grace distinctly saying if M. Philip may, with a good conscience, appropriate the hundred florins although he should cease to teach Greek, but should continue to lecture upon the Greek authors.

It appears to me he has done enough hard work those twenty years to entitle him to a little rest, seeing there are, God be praised, young M.A.'s who can teach Greek and look after the classes. For your Grace knows well what a *Famulus Communis* he is in this University, for all Christendom is indebted to him; and, thank God, he and his followers are now more feared by the Papists than any of the other scholars.

Your Grace will know how to arrange all this, for your Electoral Highness must be head rector, pastor, and director in these lands.

I herewith commit you to God. Amen. Your obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXXIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

By the *Regensburg Interim* the Emperor hoped to prevent the Protestants attacking Romish doctrines, but the Protestants rejected it, and eventually the Pope declared against tolerance.

August 4, 1541.

Grace and peace, Most Serene High-born Prince! I perfectly understand what your Electoral Grace has written me concerning the pamphlet¹ which is at present in the press; and it was not my intention that it should appear without a preface and with no delay. Whether those who issued it meant well in their conceited ignorance in doing so or not, the devil's wicked malice has foiled their efforts; for, nothing more injurious has been undertaken against us since our gospel began to spread, and it seems as if God, by a miraculous exercise of power, prevented the Papists accepting it at the Diet. The reason we were so long in taking up the matter was that Philip was on his way home, so now, by his and Dr. Caspar's advice, we have decided to print it; and the printers, in the hope of a preface from me, have taken it in hand, and although, to begin with, I decided to add no notes, now, if God spare me, I shall interlard it with as many annotations as I can, for the devil has deserved it.

I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen.
Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXXIV

TO THE ELECTORAL PRINCES, FREDERICK
AND JOHN WILLIAM

Luther rejoices over the Princes' progress in learning, etc.

September 6, 1541.

Grace and peace, Most Gracious Serene Princes! I was delighted to receive your Highnesses' letters, from

¹ *Regensburg Interim*.

which I saw what a good and solid foundation you are laying both in the sciences and religion; and I thank God, through Christ His Son, who has begun such a glorious work in such exalted personages, and beseech Him to perfect the work He has begun. And we must all ask this with our whole hearts, for we know that your Electoral Highnesses are being trained to conduct the highest and most weighty matters in the State as well as in the Church. For the Evil One is ever going about with his wily artifices trying to lay countless traps for you, especially in your own home, through false friends and courtiers, even as we read happened to King David and every good prince. Hence the poet's fable of Atlas supporting the heavens, and St. Christopher carrying the whole hemisphere on his shoulders, while he only bore the child Jesus. Your Highnesses' father has doubtless often experienced this. And even although a good prince possesses genius, power, energy, piety, and spiritual wisdom, still he constantly stands in need of the persevering humble prayers of those about him, that God, despite the power of Satan, may give him the victory. I commend your Highnesses to the protection of this good God for ever and ever. Keep me always in your gracious remembrance. My son shall write again, as he has no time at present. I did not wish to send the messenger back empty handed.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXV

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

Luther desires his wife to return from Zulusdorf.

September 18, 1541.

Grace and peace, dear Käthie! I am sending Urban to you, to prevent you being alarmed through a rumour of the Turks coming in your direction. I marvel much that you never write or send any orders, for you are aware that we are not without anxiety on your account, because Mainz¹ and many of the nobility in Meissen

¹ The Archbishop of Mayence.

are our sworn enemies. So sell, and arrange everything you can and come home, for it seems to me as if God were about to visit us with the rod of His wrath. I herewith commit you to God. Amen. MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXXVI

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH

Luther wishes him to execute a commission for him, etc.

September 25, 1541.

Grace and peace ! How often you have asked me for the measurements, my dear, and how often I have been almost sending the size of the bath ? But we were always waiting for some one to urge us on, and no one did so, therefore it has remained undone. But I now enclose the plan, which you will carry out to the best of your ability, in accordance with your voluntary promise. I do not wish to burden you. I was delighted to hear that your oppressors are being gradually humbled ; so I trust things will improve. We have good hopes of Pistorius, the former Chancellor. For they say he spoke frankly out at Regensburg, and in the end admitted that one thing puzzled him much, viz. how Christ could be High Priest to all eternity when He was succeeded by Peter, who was followed by the Pope, and then succeeded by a fresh pontiff. If these things once begin to dawn upon him, then the light of day will speedily burst upon him.

I hear you have bad news of the Turks, and you say the truth that our insufferable Turks, and the usurers, and the mighty of the earth, are also in a dilemma. I have no other news. Pray for us, as we do for you. Greet your Agnes and Lischen. My Käthie also greets you. I commit you to God. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXVII

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Theological doctor and first faithful missionary at Halle.

November 10, 1541.

Grace and peace! I have received the two fat—nay, right fat, Martinmas geese—nay, the very fattest I ever received. Accept my thanks for them. Heigho! how is it that you have such superfluity? Have you perhaps in Halle an Ethiopian banquet or Halio's table? But more of this again.

You ask for news of the Turks. I have none. It is currently reported that the Emperor Charles has taken by storm a haven called Specus from Barbarossa, and there is another rumour (which I fear is the true one) that Andreas Doria has lost all the Imperial troops fighting against the said Barbarossa. God have mercy on us! I am afraid that all our efforts against the Turks will be fruitless so long as we harbour these tyrants, these raging Turks—greed, usury, and the excesses of the nobles—with tyranny and godlessness, even going the length of indulging in diabolic contempt of the Divine Word, and casting into ridicule the blood shed for us in our ingratitude. What will it avail us, although we succeed in banishing those Turks after the flesh, so long as we permit these spiritual Turks to occupy a place at our firesides, whose mad fury has made Germany a more arid waste in God's eyes than anything the Turks could have accomplished, even as God repented having made man on the earth, at the very moment the human race seemed fairest (Gen. vi.), because of the wickedness of the children of men, the imagination of whose hearts was only evil continually?

It is even the same to-day. The earth is destroyed through incurable vice, and will perish in the last fiery judgment. Wolff Heinze, as I wrote, has not sent any message about his present of a Bible, which lies by me. Remind him. Farewell. St. Martin's Eve.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXVIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther begs for a post for his wife's brother.

November 17, 1541.

Grace and peace, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, gracious Lord! Lately I gave my dear brother-in-law a letter to you, which he lost, so I must write again, and if the other be found, and if in every word it does not agree with this, you will graciously point out the difference, for I keep no copies of my letters. The matter is this. I humbly beg your Grace to provide him with a post, however small. He is faithful and pious, that I know, also active and industrious; but he has not enough to keep himself and child in a proper manner. He was superintendent of a convent in Leipsic, and although they tried to injure him, his accounts were found correct, and his enemies' mouths were shut. I made them admit this. They wished to add what belonged to the nuns, as they used to do. Perhaps he suffered on my account, as Dr. Pistorius was again in power, and might remember the book of stolen letters. But your Electoral Grace will deal kindly with Hans, and give him a comforting answer. Your Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

1542

The Bishop of Naumburg died in 1541, and the town being Evangelical, the Elector appointed Nicolas Amsdorf, rejecting the Cathedral clergy's choice, Julius Pflug, in spite of Luther's remonstrances and the opposition of Charles V.

On January 18 the Elector, with Amsdorf, Luther, and Melanchthon, his brother John Ernest, Herzog Ernest of Brunswick, and a stately retinue, entered Naumburg, and on the 20th the new bishop was consecrated. The Reformation in Halle now made rapid progress under Dr. Jonas. War broke out in Germany. Ferdinand asked help against the Turks, but the Schmalkaldischen Princes refused, unless an abiding peace were secured. Luther's daughter Magdalena died this year, to Luther's deep grief.

CCCCXXIX

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Medler, Superintendent in Naumburg, was created Doctor of Theology in Wittenberg, where he acted as chaplain to the fugitive consort of the Elector of Brandenburg.

January 6, 1542.

To the honoured Herr Bishop Nicolas Amsdorf at Naumburg. Grace and peace! I am very angry at Medler's high-handed conduct, my excellent Bishop. Were I in your position I should act in the opposite manner and enforce silence and conciliation towards him till the approaching church visitation, when it will be decided who is patron. Meantime it would be imprudent forcibly to deprive the possessor of his rights, and even more, to coerce him into resigning them.

This is how we acted in our church visitation. Those who would not be persuaded to resign the old privileges we permitted to abide by their decision. So the Junkers continued to give away the livings as before, without consulting the Princes of the Church. If Medler has placed that potter under the ban, then, as their upper shepherd, exhort them to acquiesce, and admonish Medler to conciliatory measures. Medler must not be permitted to treat you as a mere shadow, seeing you are responsible for the Naumburg community, which has been entrusted to you. Should it be necessary, I would write him sharply for needlessly breaking the peace. Meantime be steadfast and long-suffering. Although he will never be able to achieve anything contrary to God's will, yet you have managed to extract this devil's claw, which will bring forth fruit. May you prosper in the Lord. I have a dreadful headache, therefore write you to-day.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXX

TO THE THREE PRINCES OF ANHALT,
BEGGING FOR GAME

January 11, 1542.

Grace and peace in Christ, Most Serene High-born Princes, gracious Lords! Although most unwilling to be burdensome to you, still I must beg that your Serene Highnesses would, if at all possible, send some game, for I have to help a young relative who lives with us into the holy and divinely appointed state of matrimony.

For there is little of that sort of thing to be had here, for the officials, and courtiers especially, have eaten up everything, so that neither fowls nor any other sort of game are to be had, and I have to satisfy my hunger with sausage and liver, etc.

I have never thanked your Highnesses for the pork, but now do so, although I expressed my warm thanks by word of mouth for the gift. For I have constantly experienced your Graces' manifold kindnesses towards my unworthy self; and, had the said pig arrived after the engagement, it would have been set aside for the marriage, and you would not have been troubled now. But you will graciously take my begging in good part. The wedding day is the Monday after St. Paul's Conversion, or January 30. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCXXXI

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther blames the letter-carriers for carelessness.

February 6, 1542.

Grace and peace! I repeat what I said to our excellent Herr Kilian, that you need expect no more letters from me unless you arrange that your messengers take the trouble to wait for an answer to yours. For they deliver them in such a manner, or rather toss them to the first one who comes in their way, as if they were pressed with business,

or had to strangle the Turks in the interim. If you do not see to this, then depend upon it, it is impossible for me to answer.

You know that I am too poor to send a special messenger to you, and too busy to be always asking who is going to Halle. So much for your last four, if not more letters. Herr Kilian was a most welcome guest, and would have been more so had he remained as an inmate of my house ; but he was in such haste that I pled in vain. But the union of hearts is the most delightful of banquets, no matter how far apart people may be in the body. The communion of saints is the Church. Farewell, and pray for me. The Lord be with you. Amen.

We all send warm greetings to your dear wife, who has enriched your house with so many olive branches. I would like to hear if Carlstadt died repentant. His poor wife is to be here at Easter, and then we shall hear all. Once more I commend you to God. Amen.

P.S.—The plague has deprived Bucer of his wife and son, and also of his daughters. You are aware that many learned men are absent. The friend from Basel who told me of Carlstadt's death told me a wonderful story about him : that people were spitting on his grave and at his house, but it is not right to speak evil of the dead.

We hear by way of Hungary that the Sultan's eldest son has broken away from his father and is stirring up war in Syria, because the father wishes to give the kingdom to the younger brother. Eck has written a foolish pamphlet against the Regensburg proceedings, pouring out the vials of his wrath against Bucer, although he vilifies others as well.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXXII

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH

Letter of consolation.

March 10, 1542.

Grace and peace ! Wait upon the Lord and act like a man, my dear Anton. Were there no such thing as

temptation to try Christian faith, what would become of so many over-confident, lazy, and self-indulgent Christians? Most certainly just what has befallen the Papacy. Now, as temptation serves as myrrh, aloes, rhubarb, and a counter-irritant to the fleshly sins of the Christian's body of death, therefore it ought not to be lightly esteemed, and we must be on our guard against wilfully choosing our afflictions, but must accept those which God sees fit to visit us with, and which will be most salutary for us, no matter how heavy they may be.

Therefore be steadfast, and consider that when we have to endure temptation, as is only right, we ought gladly to endure those that are meted out to us rather than risk being visited with severer trials, such as fire and sword, which the Papists would gladly inflict upon us. And do not worry about your mother because she prefers living in Stolpe, under Papal rule, rather than at Pirna. Pray always for her, and you have done enough. The Bishop of Cologne is beginning to reform abuses in his diocese. We have heard nothing new of the Turk, nor of our preparations. The Emperor has issued an Edict in the Netherlands forbidding the persecution of the Lutherans. After a two years' pause the Bible gradually slipped into France among other books. When Parliament, the monks, and sophists heard this, they were so furious that they burned fifty of them; but the populace were so enraged, that the King, fearing an insurrection, gave way. In much haste, and pray I may have a happy release.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXXIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther thanks the Prince for a legal decision in his favour.

March 26, 1542.

Grace and peace in Christ, and my poor paternoster, most gracious lord! I must discharge my debt to you, for it is long since I wrote you, and thank you for the verdict in connection with my Käthie. We are much

pleased with it, for your goodness will do much to promote peace and harmony. Next, I must thank you for the wine, although it is quite a superfluous gift.

In the third place, we have let the rector and the university know that your Grace does not wish me to be taxed upon my house and goods, but that its valuation should be taken, for which I render my humble thanks. But I deem it right to let you know my thoughts on the subject, and plead for them your gracious consideration.

I would gladly estimate, if I could, the value of the great cloister house, but I fear that after my death my Käthie or the children might dispute the assessment, seeing I have always had difficulty in keeping it in repair with glass, iron, etc. Hearing that the house might through time be used for military purposes, I purchased Hans Brun's house for my Käthie and the children for 400 florins and 20 for repairs, but have only paid 120 which I owe, therefore I can hardly estimate it, seeing it is bonded up to its value.

But I humbly beg your Grace to let me value the rest, viz. the garden for 500 florins, the court with the garden 90, and a small garden 20 florins. I would gladly be an example to others and pay my mite towards the Turkish war expenses, for many give grudgingly. I do not wish them to be envious of Dr. Martinus, because he does not need to give. And who knows if God would not be as pleased with our offering as He was with that of the poor widow ; and I wish to be among those who would injure the Turk. For were I not too old and frail I should like to be among the warriors. Nevertheless, our prayers have long been with those on the field, for I fear our Germans have been too foolhardy, having, to begin with, underrated the enemy, who is by no means to be despised, having all the devils in hell on his side ; and if God with His angels does not become reconciled to us, I place little dependence upon our might or our preparations. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen. And I hope your Electoral Grace will not be offended because I delayed in answering, for at present I am busy trying to put Mahommed into

German, which prevented me thinking of anything else.
Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCXXXIV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther still anxious to receive the Prince's present.

July 13, 1542.

Although I do not trouble myself much about food, which concerns only myself, yet as a married man and a debtor to my household, who, if he provide not for those of his own household, is worse than an infidel, as St. Paul declares, I pray to you to see that I am not again cheated out of the Prince's gift, which I value highly. You know those birds of prey who see to themselves, and let neighbourly love go to the wall. I fear few of those stems are to be had in this quarter, hence their eagerness. I wish to retain those purchased by my orders, whether firs or oaks, instead of those which have been sold, if they can be kept uninjured till I require them.

Farewell in the Lord. In haste. Loaded with business.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1317.)

CCCCXXXV

TO WENZEL LINK AT NÜRNBERG

About Bibles being delayed, etc.

July 25, 1542.

Health and blessing in the Lord! You are annoyed, dear Doctor, about the Bibles being so long of reaching you, but I told you how overwhelmed our bookbinders are with work. Thus it is that many cannot receive their copies in less than six months. I gave three to bind, and it was with the utmost difficulty I got one of them out of their hands a month ago; the others I do not expect to see before Michaelmas. Great people all send theirs here to be bound, and naturally they precede us. One must not

be offended with these people, but consider the advantages they reap from the press of business. However, you shall soon receive your two copies.

Concerning your Genesis I can promise nothing, for the publishers object to large works, because they know from experience that if they do not sell it is a great loss to them. If a preface from me can be of any service to you, why plead for it, as you know I am always ready. You would have been wiser to give your work to Socerius or some one in Central Germany, as I wrote you, for these do nothing at all, so I am indignant seeing good paper, beautiful lettering, and hard work bestowed on such contaminating writings. Bucer and such-like, who ought not to write, do so constantly. You understand. I commend you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXXVI

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther advises that St. Moritz in Halle, which the Elector Albrecht had shut up, should be opened for Evangelical service.

August 18, 1542.

Grace and peace! My dear Herr Jonas, why hesitate as to opening the third church? The time has come to which we looked forward when your burghermaster and syndic, Dr. Kilian, were here. The Son of God, who has hitherto been trampled under foot, has at length been glorified among His enemies, having won such a victory as neither we nor His enemies could have believed possible. Christ has been openly manifested; and although I have no desire that the Mayence monster should fall a victim to God's wrath and eternal perdition, still I rejoice that the old knave has lived to see the confusion and irrevocable failure of his diabolic projects. Praise be to God, who is judge upon the earth, and destroys the work of the godless, so that bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. Let him now weep as he deserves, and await his punishment for having rejoiced in wickedness

and all that is against God, as well as in all that is God-like. Do join with us in thanking Him with loud voice, for He has showed us wondrous things to His own glory, and has not despised the sighs of the destitute, but has heard their cries. Thus, Lord, shall thine enemies perish. Amen.

MARTINUS LUTHER.

JOHANNES POMMERANUS.

CASPAR CRUCIGER.

PHILIPPUS MELANCHTHON.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXXXVII

TO MARCUS CRÜDEL, SCHOOLMASTER IN TORGAU

Luther wishes his son educated at a public school.

August 26, 1542.

Grace and peace! I send you my son Hans, as we arranged, my dear Marcus, so that he may be instructed in grammar and music along with the other boys, and at the same time I hope you will attend to his manners and morals. I am committing a great trust to you in the Lord. I shall never grudge the outlay, and you will report his progress and let me know what should be done with him. I send Florian, one of his schoolmates, with him, for it is important that boys should have others to vie with. But you must be more strict with the latter, and if you can, board him with a burgher; if not, send him back. God bless your efforts. If they succeed, then I shall, if spared, send the other two boys; for in future we shall not easily find such unwearied instructors, especially in the languages, and such strict disciplinarians as you. Therefore, one must seize the opportunity, for time flies, and competent teachers disappear even more quickly. For more advanced studies they would be better here. Farewell in the Lord, and say to Hans Walter that I pray for his welfare, and commit my little son to his care in music. I can train theologians, but wish my children to have grammar and music. So once more farewell, and greet Gabriel and his

family. And for the third time I wish you continued prosperity.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXXVIII

TO MARCUS CRÖDEL

Luther sends for his son to see his dying sister.

September 6, 1542.

Grace and peace, my dear Marcus! I beg of you to conceal from my son John what I now write. My daughter Magdalene is nearing her end, and will soon depart to her true Father in heaven unless God see fit to spare her. She longs so to see her brother that I send a carriage to fetch him. They loved one another tenderly, so perhaps a sight of him will revive her. I do my best, so that my fatherly heart may not afterwards be torn by remorse. Desire him therefore, without telling him why, to return at once. I shall send him back as soon as she has either fallen asleep in the Lord or been restored to health. Farewell in the Lord. Say to him we must have something private to communicate. All here are otherwise well.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXXIX

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther tries to convince Jonas of the Elector Albrecht's insincerity.

September 23, 1542.

Grace and peace in the Lord! I abide by my opinion, my Jonas, that the Mayence Satan will never alienate the Burgraviate of Halle, especially at such a price, and with the stipulation that the gospel should have free course there. Whatever this son of perdition says and does is pure deceit and lies. You remember that I often said that the sun had never looked down upon anything so crafty upon God's earth as this man. He turns our Prince into ridicule, even as he makes fun of every one. Therefore, I consider that you Halle people are being needlessly

alarmed through false rumours ; and this monster delights in beholding the misery of the wretched, whether the torment be real or fanciful. At your request I have earnestly admonished your son to obey his father, and such a father, reminding him how grateful he should feel to God for letting him enjoy such a blessing till he is nearing the years of maturity, one who can counsel and help him in the slippery paths of youth, in a world so full of the machinations of the devil. He promised to follow your advice and that of his teachers.

I fancy that you have heard that my beloved Magdalene has been reborn into Christ's everlasting Kingdom. Although my wife and I ought to rejoice on account of her happy end, still the tenderness of the father's heart is so great that we cannot think of it without sobs and sighs, which tear asunder the heart. For the image of this most obedient and tenderly loving daughter ever hovers before our eyes, with everything she said and did in life as well as in death, that even the death of Christ (and what are all deaths compared to that?) is almost powerless to obliterate the memory.

Therefore thank God for us. For has He not honoured us greatly in glorifying our child? You know how affectionate and sensible she was, nay, how charming. Christ be praised for choosing her, and calling her away, and glorifying her. I pray God that I and all of us may have such a death, nay, such a life. This is my one petition to the Father of all consolation and mercy. In Him may you and yours prosper. Amen. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXL

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Reply to letter of consolation on Magdalene's death.

October 29, 1542.

Grace and peace ! Many thanks, most excellent friend, for trying to console me on my dearest daughter's death. I loved her not only because she was my flesh, but for her placid and gentle spirit and her dutifulness to me. But

now I rejoice that she is sleeping sweetly in her Heavenly Father's home till that day. Alas, for the days in which we live ! And they are daily becoming worse. I pray that we and all dear to us may be granted such a blessed hour of departure as was her lot. I would call this really sleeping in the Lord, not experiencing one pang of fear. This is the time of which Isaiah speaks, "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come ; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness," just as when one gathers the wheat into the barn, and commits the chaff to the flames, a punishment the world has deserved for her ingratitude. Truly it is a Sodom. I should like to write you oftener, but you write so seldom. I agree with you as to the reports about Heinz's judgments and threats. Your Meissen people are become a byword through this man at Merseburg, where they portray themselves as so courageous and us so timid. The war prospects give good reason for fear. I never thought we could achieve anything against the Turks except squander our money and reap ridicule. What could God accomplish with such tools ? So we must pray without ceasing that He would overcome this monstrosity, even as He did with the Papacy, with all its abominations. Did you get my letter asking for a post for Dr. Hieronymus Weller, who complains of the indifference of the Freiberg people to the Divine Word ? But as things are not yet settled with you, this request may come at an inopportune time.

Comfort yourself in the Lord and be steadfast, for you are Christ's servant, who called you to this post, even if you merely remain quietly in your place, preventing the devil occupying it, although you should do nothing more all your life.

And thus how much more are you His servants when you are not only not idle, but maintain a constant conflict, and purify the people from sin through the Word of God. I commit you to God. My Káthie greets you, although she often breathes a sigh over the memory of her beloved and obedient daughter.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXLI

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther tries to comfort his friend on the death of his amiable wife.

December 25, 1542.

Grace and peace in Christ, who is our salvation and consolation, my dear Jonas! I have been so thoroughly prostrated by this unexpected calamity that I do not know what to write. We have all lost in her the dearest of friends. Her bright presence, her eye so full of trust, all drew forth our love, especially as we knew that she shared both our joys and sorrows as if they had been her own. A bitter parting in very deed, for I hoped that after I was gone she would have been the best of comforters for those I left behind. The deep longing after one so distinguished by piety, propriety, and amiability makes me weep. Therefore I can easily imagine your feelings. Temporal consolation is of no avail here. One must look solely to the unseen and eternal. She is our precursor into the regions beyond, where we shall all be gathered on our dismissal from this vale of tears and this corrupt world. Amen.

Mourn, therefore, as you have good cause to do, but at the same time comfort yourself with the thought of the common lot of humanity. Although according to the flesh the parting has been very bitter, nevertheless we shall be reunited in the life beyond, and enjoy the sweetest communion with the departed, as well as with Him who loved us so, that He purchased our life through His own blood and death. It is very true that God's mercy is better than life. What does it matter though we should suffer a little here, when there we shall partake of joy unutterable? Oh, what a gulf separates those Turks, Jews, and, still worse, those Papists, Cardinals Heinz and Mainz, from this glory! Would they could weep now, so that they may not mourn eternally! For we, after mourning a little while, shall enter into joy, whither your Käthie and my Magdalena have gone, and are now

beckoning us to follow. For who is not weary of the abominations of our time, or rather of this hell, which pains spirit and eye day and night? I am too grieved on your account to write more. My wife was thunderstruck when she heard the news, for she and your wife were as one soul. We pray God to give you temporal consolation. For you have good cause to rejoice when you know your pious wife has been snatched from your side to enjoy everlasting life in heaven. And of this you cannot doubt, as she fell asleep in Jesus, with so many pious expressions of her faith in Him. Thus also slumbered my little daughter, which is my great and only consolation. God, who has tried you, will comfort you now and for ever. Amen. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXLII

TO HIS SON HANS LUTHER

Luther begs him to moderate his grief.

December 25, 1542.

Grace and peace, my dearest Hans! I and thy mother and all the household are well. Do endeavour manfully to conquer thy tears, that thou mayst not add to thy mother's distress, for she is only too prone to grieve. Obey God, who, through us, desires you to work where you are, and then thou wilt easily overcome your weakness. Thy mother cannot write, and does not think it necessary to repeat what she said to you, viz. that you can come home if things go badly with you, but she meant if you were ill. If this happen, let us know at once. Otherwise she hopes you will cease this lamentation, and pick up heart and go quietly on with your studies. May all go well with you in the Lord. Thy Father,

MARTIN LUTHER.

1543

Luther had done away with the elevation of the sacramental elements in the Schloss Church in 1542, and Bugenhagen had done the same in the Stadt Church. Bucer and Melanchthon were in Cologne, promoting the Reformation there. In June the Protestants met in Schmalkalden, and received the King of Sweden into their bond. A new version of the Bible was published, and Matthesius gives a glimpse of those engaged in the laborious work of supervision in Luther's house. Melanchthon, that master of Greek, was there, with Cruciger, so well versed in Hebrew and Greek as well as in Chaldean, along with Bugenhagen with his intimate knowledge of the Vulgate. And Justus Jonas and Aurogallus, Professor of Hebrew, were also present, while George Rörer acted as corrector. Other learned guests from afar often lent their aid.

CCCCXLIII

TO CHANCELLOR BRÜCK

About the elevation of elements in the sacrament.

January 6, 1543.

Grace and peace in Christ, esteemed, deeply learned dear sir! Your son brought me your letters yesterday, but my head has not been in a state to look at them. I know Dr. Stephen of Hof well, and that he has long wished for a change, but I knew of nothing good enough or better than he now has; but so long as the Prince will put up with him, I do not advise him to flee, for this scurrilous poem is too trifling to make him play into the devil's hands through flight or despondency. For his servants go about murdering and plaguing the poor people, and he must be willing to suffer with his brethren; for, he who will not suffer with Christ and His saints takes the part of the devils and their angels, and he will hear the angels in heaven laugh at him.

Concerning the elevation of the elements in the sacrament, I shall await Philip's return. These godless ceremonies are giving us much more trouble than greater and more essential matters, as they have always done. I doubt if it be wise to publish anything on the subject. I fear we shall never agree in all the churches concerning forms

of church service, even as it was impossible to do so in the Papacy. For although we arrange this or that here, others will not be led by us. Even the Apostles themselves found it equally difficult with their rites, so had to leave each free as to eating, dressing, and behaving himself. But more of this when I have considered the matter. I commit you to God. Amen.

I beg you sometimes to plead with God that I may have a tranquil departure. I am quite overworked and exhausted, and the head is useless. I crave grace and mercy, and these I have received, and shall receive increasingly. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXLIV

TO WENZEL LINK

Luther justifies himself. The Venetians complain of sacramental disputes, and Luther blames the Zwinglians.

January 20, 1543.

Grace and peace! You complain, dear one, that I do not answer your letters, and said you had not enclosed your annotations on Moses because we scholars looked down on such crude work. It is not very good taste to fling such an accusation in any man's face. You must know that I have less leisure than you. I, feeble, worn-out old man, am without such things, overburdened with letter-writing, and am longing for my last hour in order to rest from work. I can see no other end of this everlasting writing and tempestuous life. And how could you fancy I despised your work when I accompanied my remarks with a laborious preface? That I have not thanked you, proceeds merely from weariness of writing, which may be pardoned in an old exhausted man overwhelmed with work.

I now send you my lectures on the first forty-one chapters of Genesis, through Mr. George Rörer, who also has his hands full, and is himself the servant of the printer's servants. He is not to blame if they please you as little as they do me. They have too many words for my taste, and more stress might have been laid on such an im-

portant subject. I have nearly finished the first book of Moses, being at chapter 45th. May the Lord enable me to finish the work, or take me away from this transient, sinful life ! Join me in praying for this.

I had a glimpse of the Pope's letter to the Emperor, and of the Bull of the Council of Trent, which opens on Sunday Latere. May the Lord Christ once more defeat those godless scoffers ! I am much pleased with Osiander's pamphlet against the Zwinglian rascals. Spalatin still lives, but is so weak that he often cannot taste food. The Lord keep him. He is an excellent man. My Käthie thanks you for the quinsy juice, and I for the poetess you sent, and for your kind offer to serve me, which you best can do by praying that I may have a happy exit out of this world. I am worn out and fit for nothing. May you and yours prosper in the Lord. Amen.

(Schütze.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCXLV

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Letter of sympathy.

January 26, 1543.

Grace and peace ! I have had such severe headaches, dear Jonas, that I could neither read nor write, so I have not yet read your translation. I can easily believe that your recent loss is daily becoming harder to bear ; and now that you are recovering from your prostration the longing for communion with the best of women is reviving within you. But the unalterable must be overcome through patience. God Himself, the great Healer, will heal this wound also. Our only news is that the Elector of Brandenburg is in very bad odour because of the war he is waging in Hungary. And Ferdinand himself is not much better spoken of. From all I hear the most disgraceful treachery is at the root of the whole enterprise ; and may God Himself prevent worse evils. Oh, the mad rage of the devil ! The messenger is in haste, so I must close. More again. I commit you to God.

(Schütze.)

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCXLVI

TO HERR PANCRA TZ, PREACHER AT DANTZIC

Luther rejoices at the spread of the gospel in Dantzic.

March 7, 1543.

I devoured your letters with the greatest delight, rejoicing to hear of the wonderful progress the Word of God is making in Dantzic. May the Lord perfect His work, which He began through you! You say the king¹ and bishops have forbidden the sacrament to the people, for which they are longing. If they had sufficient faith and courage to do God's will, in preference to that of man, then I would advise them to risk partaking of it. Any magistrate who is not opposed to the rite could find excuses for them with the king. He could say it was not his duty to interfere in church matters or introduce innovations, or, in other words, to teach God knowledge. For when the king forbade preaching in Dantzic there existed another state of matters there, serious disturbances being rife among the citizens. Now that they are at one, having received the greater, viz. the Word of God, why should they be forbidden accepting the lesser? For, in an exigency, one can do without the sacrament, but not without the Divine Word. But should things be otherwise now, that outweighs the reasons for this participation in the sacrament. Nevertheless do not desist from preaching the Word or forsake the church, but steadfastly proclaim the doctrine of the sacraments. So, if they cannot have the ordinance now, let believers still long earnestly for it, and comfort themselves through their faith in it, till the Lord hear their earnest prayer, and strengthen them to confess their faith openly, and enter into the full enjoyment of the sacrament.

The main point has already been achieved when the administration of the church has been reformed.

May the Lord strengthen you and all your believing ones with His Holy Spirit, that you may have courage

¹ Of Poland.

to bring matters to a happy conclusion. God grant this.

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

CCCCXLVII

TO FRIEDRICH MYCONIUS

Luther pleads for a deposed pastor.

April 4, 1543.

Grace and peace! The bearer, Conrad, who declares, my excellent Myconius, that you deposed him from his charge at Ersnod, insisted I should write you. He complains that after long years of work he is plunged into poverty with five children depending on him. To get rid of him I send him back to you, pleading you will listen to him and help him to the utmost, so that he may not perish of hunger. I am not reflecting on you in the slightest, having always had the highest opinion of you. But I could not turn a deaf ear to his misery.

I shall be truly delighted if you are once more restored to health; and I pray God to spare you. When I was so often at the gates of death this year, I felt as if I were suffocated by the burdens of the world. May the Lord grant me a blessed release and hasten that glorious day. May it be soon—very soon, Amen—so that the world may cease to rage against His Name and Word. God grant this.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCXLVIII

TO GEORGE HELD, COUNSELLOR TO PRINCE JOACHIM
OF ANHALT, WHOSE CLERGY CONDEMNED SACRED
PLAYS

April 5, 1543.

Grace and peace! Our Joachim has asked my opinion as to sacred plays founded upon Holy Scripture, which some of our clergy disapprove of. In few words I shall tell you what I think. All are commanded to make known the Word of God in some way or other, not only by words but by pictures—carved work, writings, psalms, hymns, and musical instruments; as the Psalm says:

“Praise the Lord with harp,” etc.; and Moses says: “Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes: and write them upon the posts of thy house.” Moses wishes God’s Word to be ever before men’s eyes, and this cannot be more easily attained than by means of such plays, which are at the same time serious and modest and free from the jugglery which tainted them in Papal times. Such plays have often more influence over the people than public preaching. In South Germany, where Evangelical preaching is forbidden, many have been led to receive the gospel through such representations of the law and gospel. When given with a desire to further the progress of truth, and represented in a serious and modest manner, they are by no means to be condemned. May you prosper with your excellent Princes, whom I hope God will long spare to you for the sake of His Church.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCXLIX

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Concerning his friend’s second marriage.

May 4, 1543.

Grace and peace in the Lord! I have no intention, my excellent Jonas, of standing in the way of your marriage, or of anything pertaining to your prosperity, but would rather try to promote both. I only pleaded for delay in my last letter, and this solely because of the calumnies of the enemy and of those who try to blacken our actions; and although such scandal does not injure us, still, as Cato says, it is a heavy burden to bear without any cause. Still, if you feel yourself strong enough to rise above the ill-will of the devil and his friends, then go on in God’s name and do not dream of delay. Give up every dream of shutting people’s mouths and of winning their favour. You need not hesitate because of our Prince; he spoke very kindly of you lately. Still I wish you to stir up as little malice in our opponents as possible. I have heard your bride highly praised. God

grant she may possess the many virtues of your Kätthie—nay, surpass her whose memory is sacred. May the children and stepmother love each other dearly, and may she make up for the loss of the best of mothers.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCI.

TO EBERHARDT BRISGER

Luther pleads for one behind in his payments.

August 30, 1543.

Grace and peace! I can quite believe that you require your money. On the other hand, I also see that with the good Bruno, I know not how, nothing seems to succeed. He requires assistance from all quarters. The farmers are so greedy that they grudge their pastors a bit of bread. I therefore plead with you—especially as you can do without your money with little injury to yourself—to have patience with Bruno. We are planning, if possible, to have him transferred to a richer living. I would not trouble you with this request did I not think you could do me this favour without damaging yourself.

Concerning Spalatin, I also beg you, as far as you can, to be patient with this, in other respects, so good and excellent man. So as Satan once upon a time appeared among the children of God—nay, even among the angels in heaven—what wonder then if he mixes among us to sift and winnow us? And with Spalatin old age is beginning to tell upon him, and especially the want of the repose which he enjoyed under three Princes. Therefore he must be treated with the consideration due to an experienced man, and not as a novice who can be twisted like a branch. Old stems can be broken but not bent; and old dogs cannot be bridled. So in order to live in peace, patience is necessary. This is merely a reminder. You know best yourself what to do. I herewith commend you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCLI

TO CHRISTOPH FROSCHAUER, PRINTER AT ZURICH

August 31, 1543.

Grace and peace in the Lord, honoured and good friend! I have received the present of the Bible which you sent by your manager, and I thank you for it. But seeing it is the work of your preachers, with whom neither I nor the Church of God can have any communion, I am sorry that their labour should be in vain. They have been sufficiently warned to quit their errors and not take the poor people to hell with them. But admonition is useless, therefore they must go their own way, but never again send me any of their work. I shall be no partaker of their damnation or damnable doctrines, but pray and teach against them to my end. May God convert them and help the poor churches to get rid of such false, seductive preachers. Amen. Although at present they laugh at all this, one day they shall weep when they find themselves sharers of Zwingli's fate, whom they follow. May God preserve you and all blameless hearts from their spirit. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCLIH

TO VEIT DIETRICH

Luther requests his friend to prosecute his Biblical work.

November 7, 1543.

Grace and peace! Magister Rörer, who has the mastery over me, ordered me to write to you, my dear Dietrich. Perhaps I might have paid no attention to my master's command, being rather incensed against him, had he not used all his eloquence to convince me that it was necessary to spur you on to continue your labours on my first book of Moses. Perhaps I might have resisted him with a flow of rhetoric, had I not at length been mollified by the dialectic commonplaces: "When a

beginning has once been made, it is disgraceful to retreat, in case Moses himself should upbraid us in that well-known proverb, 'Rather do not allow the guest into the house than throw him out of the window.'" You also could chant such-like phrases from the Greek. I must confess to not being at all pleased with my works. How much is wanting that ought to be found in them? But I comfort myself with St. Paul's words: "Who is sufficient for these things?" If we refused to open our mouths till we felt qualified to do so, then Christ would never be preached. But it is well for us that out of the mouths of babes He prepareth strength, and through Moses' stammering lips, or, as it is in the original, through him who was slow of speech, he demolished the land of Egypt and the Canaanites; and by means of unlearned apostles transformed the face of the globe. So give ample satisfaction to my master, M. Rörer. How can I be gracious to you if you are unjust to him? Pray for me. I commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCLIH

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther regrets that his health has prevented him visiting his friend.

November 7, 1543.

Grace and peace in the Lord! I am quite indignant at myself, my honoured Bishop, that I have so often been prevented visiting you. Yesterday everything was packed for setting off, and then something came between to prevent me. It seems as if God permitted Satan to hinder it. Therefore, if God will, I shall hurry to your arms on the first favourable opportunity without making previous plans. For I am anxious to see you once again before I die. My head has been a good deal better, and although the physicians have made a wound in my foot, that would not have prevented my journey. They did it to try to heal my head, but as yet without result. I fear my disease is old age, along with overwork and

many conflicts, and, above all, the assaults of Satan. Medical science is powerless against all these. Meantime I let them do as they will, in case they look upon me as my own enemy, or fancy I think them in error. My head is again beginning to ache with no apparent cause. I believe it is the devil. I write all this to let you know how I long to come to you as soon as God permits.

I have no news, and no desire to hear any. The world is the world, has ever been the world, and will remain the world, which knows nothing of Christ, and has no desire to. For the unspeakable neglect of the Word and the inexpressible sighs of the pious are palpable signs that the world is hastening to destruction, and that our redemption is near. Amen. God grant it. Amen.

It was thus before the flood with the world, and before the destruction of Sodom, and before the Babylonian captivity, and before Jerusalem's fall, and the devastation of Rome, and the calamities in Greece and Hungary ; and it will be, and now is, before Germany's downfall. They will not hear, therefore they must be made to feel. I should like to discuss those matters more fully with you for our mutual comfort. Still we must sing with Jeremiah: "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed." Farewell in the Lord, who is our salvation, and who will bless us to all eternity. From the heart of

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCLIV

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther promises to write a preface to a book of Spalatin's.

November 23, 1543.

To the highly esteemed Herr George Spalatin, Bishop of Meissen, faithful shepherd at Altenburg, my superior in the Lord. Grace and peace ! Your little book pleases me greatly, dear Spalatin, except the allusion to the conventual life of the nun, against which I shall warn the readers in the preface, or if you prefer to do this yourself,

you can have it back. Besides I do not like to cut jokes in prefacing other people's books ; thus it shall be printed at once.

My Käthie begs that if my people require your counsel or help, you will give it unhesitatingly. For she sends her horses and carts to fetch the remaining pieces of wood while the weather and roads are good. She says the eleven were hewn, but twenty-four belonging to her still remain to be hewn. She will procure whatever may be necessary for the work. May you and your wife prosper in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1326.)

CCCCLV

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Concerning the Hebrew Chair in Wittenberg.

December 3, 1543.

Grace and peace in the Lord, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord ! The Hebrew Chair is now vacant through the death of Aurogallus, and as some may be applying for it, I would most humbly beg your Electoral Grace to bestow it upon M. Lucas Edenberger, not only because he has difficulty in maintaining himself in these times, but because he is well known to your Grace and all of us as a faithful and industrious man, and zealous for the purity of the faith, all of which are very necessary for one who is to teach Hebrew. For there are many Hebrew scholars who are more Rabbinical than Christian, and yet the fact is, whoever does not see Christ in the Old Testament and in the Hebrew tongue sees nothing and talks like the blind about colour. Now M. Lucas is a thorough theologian and well qualified to teach Hebrew, and has served your Grace. Now who knows or has proved those recently arrived here ? Your Electoral Highness will graciously grant my humble request, asked with good cause and from no wrong motive. I commend you to God, who will help you and all pious princes and lords in these

difficult times, when Satan is so full of evil devices. Amen. Your Electoral Highness's humble

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCLVI

TO JOHANN MATTHESIIUS OF JOACHIM'S THAL

Luther's former boarder, who wrote the first Life of Luther, given in a series of lectures to a Bible Class.

December 14, 1543.

Grace and peace in the Lord! M. Caspar¹ writes me that you are much disquieted over the tyranny of this most wretched King Ferdinand, who has decided to banish all married pastors from his dominions. I should be surprised if the Bohemians consented to this mad act. Still, they may do so. But what would be the result? Are Ferdinand's the only lands in the world? Has Christ no other land which would gladly receive His grace? And will not He who casts down kings forsake Ferdinand's kingdom as the land of His wrath? Why fear nightmares? Rather be full of confidence in God's strength. Despise this water-bubble, who does not know whether he may be a king or a worm to-morrow. But we shall reign with Christ to all eternity, while he shall burn in hell with the devil. I herewith commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCLVII

TO JUSTUS JONAS

Luther receives a copy of the Bull condemning him in Rome twenty-five years before.

December 16, 1543.

Grace and peace! I received your letter, my Jonas, with the enclosed copy of the Bull in which Luther was condemned twenty-five years ago. You know what, since then, has been written, spoken, and attempted in every way to accomplish our destruction. And what do

¹ Cruciger.

they still leave untried? This fury against us is, as the Scripture says, everlasting, like that eternal fire which will never cease, and which awaits them. For even in hell they will not stop maligning God's Son. Praise be to God, who has separated us from their society through His holy calling. Concerning the progress of the war, about which you write us, we only know that the Emperor put the French to flight, avoiding a battle. He is probably imitating the cunning of the Turks, who weary out the enemy, refusing to fight unless compelled to; meanwhile the expense incurred disgusts and tires us out.

Did you hear that the Emperor said to the Herzog of Jülich: "I have paid more money for your generals than for the whole war." And the Prince of Nassau Orange said to his uncle: "Ah, dear uncle, what will you gain from the Emperor? Your officers have cost him more money than all the war." What will be the outcome of all this treachery on the part of princes and kings? War is now carried on with money, not with arms. The soldiers are paid by their princes, and receive presents from the enemy. Through such valour was Luxemburg taken, the French general paying 20,000 ducats to the Emperor's mercenaries to deliver up the town and pretend they were conquered. It is also said that Andrea von Doria concluded a secret understanding with Barbarossa at sea, saying: "Are we among friends? Why should we destroy one another? *Thy* as well as *my* lord will still remain Emperor!" Truly a heroic way of bleeding kings, princes, and peoples! What will be left for the poor man if we have to satisfy these insatiable demands? We shall soon feel this diabolic greed in our pockets. And lastly, it is reported that the Turks have massacred three thousand citizens and old men and also pastors in Stuhlweissenburg, so that their corpses were heaped over the town walls. Satan is becoming afraid, and rages, because his time is short. May the Lord protect His own, or enable them through His joyful spirit to mock at his wrath, whether they may be preserved or destroyed.

It is said that the Emperor intends to reinstate the Herzog of Brunswick, but through what means I know

not. Let us pray for our princes. For I doubt not, if a war broke out, that our *Centauren* would do as the Jülich people did—after they had squeezed everything out of our princes, they would sell them for money. Money, only money! This is the maxim of those in power. They will sacrifice nothing for the Fatherland. They only wish to enrich themselves, and under the pretext, or by means of the opportunity which war affords, swallow up everything. “Devour” in the devil’s name; hell will give you enough of this. Come, Lord Jesus, and hear the sighs of Thy Church! Hasten Thy appearing, for the evils are coming to a height. I have written this in order to write something. Farewell, and teach your church to hasten the day of the Lord through their prayers. God will listen to the sighing for the day of redemption. All the signs foretell this. Your own

MARTIN LUTHER.

WITTENBERG.
(Schütze.)

1544

The Diet of Speyer met on February 20. The Elector came with a brilliant retinue, and was received with great respect by Charles V., who required help against the French, as Ferdinand did against the Turk. The Protestants tried to gain favourable terms for themselves. The question of secret marriage engagements came up this year. The worry this caused, and the renewed disputes on the Sacrament with the Swiss, made Luther ill. He said he would leave Wittenberg, but by his birthday Melancthon wrote joyfully to Dietrich that he, Cruciger, Bugenhagen, Jonas, etc., had dined with him, and lovingly discussed Church matters.

CCCCLVIII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

The Wittenberg lawyers ratify Caspar Beier’s secret marriage engagement.

January 22, 1544.

Grace and peace and my poor paternoster! I humbly desire to inform your Grace that secret engagements are again common here. Many young people are here from

many lands, so that the maidens have become very bold, and pursue the students into their rooms, offering them their love; and I hear some parents are ordering their sons home, declaring that we hang women about their necks, depriving them of their sons, and thus give this fine school of learning a bad name. I fancied your Grace had ordered secret engagements to be done away with. So, as I sat securely here, I was shocked by a verdict of our Consistorium upon a private engagement. Therefore I was moved to preach a powerful sermon against them on the following Sabbath, saying we must adhere to the old paths, which from time immemorial have been inculcated in the Holy Scriptures and among the heathen, as well as among ourselves, viz. that parents shall dispose of their children without any previous engagement, which is an invention of the Pope, at the devil's instigation, to undermine the God-given authority of the parents, robbing them of their children, to their deep grief, instead of said children honouring them according to God's command. This would have happened to Philip and his wife had I not preached this sermon.

They would have pined for their son, who had been led astray by evil companions till he secretly and solemnly engaged himself, and I had difficulty in setting him free. I also recall the case of Herzog Philip with his son Ernest and Starstedel's daughter, of which your Grace knows, and something similar nearly happened in my house. Now, as these secret vows are certainly the work of the devil and the Papacy to undermine God's command to prevent them entering into a happy marriage, I shall not suffer this church of Christ, of which I am pastor, and of which I must render account to God, the Holy Ghost, to tolerate them. I have proclaimed from the pulpit that a child cannot become engaged himself; and that if he do, it is no engagement, and a father must not acquiesce therein, now that we know what is the origin of all this misery. Therefore I humbly request that your Grace would once more, for God's sake, exercise your authority with the princely powers against Pope and devil, so that we may be in a better position to drive out of our church

this devil, the secret oath, so that poor parents may be able to train and retain their children in security.

Therefore I plead that Caspar Beier, who has appealed from the Consistorium to your Grace, should be set free before you leave for the Diet, for it has been a slow process. I could have arranged it in a day, but they have been at it since Whitsuntide, and have merely discovered a private vow and the weak will of the father, who declares that he never wished it should take place, but they seemed determined not to understand. Certainly the son in his four years' engagement neither asked his parents' consent nor that of the maiden's parents, which is unusual when young men are in love; but let the vow fall into abeyance till the maiden's people appeal to the father.

Still all this is nothing so long as the poisoned vow, the oath, remains unrefuted. Your Electoral Grace will act wisely, for in this insignificant work your Grace will be doing a glorious service to God and to many others, besides affording consolation to all parents and preventing numberless dangers to many souls. May the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to whom be praise to all eternity, help your Electoral Grace in all such matters. Amen. Your Electoral Grace's humble servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCLIX

TO GEORGE SPALATIN

Luther accounts for delay in printing a little book, etc.

January 30, 1544.

Grace and peace! You sometimes write in an annoyed tone, dear Spalatin, as if you did not know where your little book was. I do not take your love towards the fruit of your humour (*witz*) in bad part, seeing you joke about your love for me. But I must inform you that the book is in the hands of the printers. But the press is so full that it cannot be finished as quickly as you wish. You perhaps do not know how we are driven, but I may

tell you that never in my life have I had more worry in connection with the gospel than in the year upon which we have entered. For I have a very hard battle with the lawyers over secret engagements. And it is from those whom I regarded as the truest friends of the gospel that I have had most opposition. Is that not enough to annoy me, dear Spalatin? Therefore, have patience with my remissness, if that is what you mean. For if I did not love you dearly, I would not be writing you now with so much to worry me. But your little book shall be seen to as far as I can, for I like it well. Farewell, and pray for the church—that is, ourselves. Our enemies in our midst do more harm than outward foes, like Judas among the apostles. But the crucified triumphs and the crucifiers perish. Greet your dear wife. My Kätie sends you those roots, which you may not have, and I think them a very good remedy against stone. It has helped me and many others. Once more farewell, and be assured I do not despise your book. You are my oldest and best friend, and would be the last to be lightly esteemed by me, and I wished to explain to you all my worries, and if I may apparently sometimes be found wanting in regard to what is due to you, still you are very dear to me, and will always remain so. Again farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1329.)

CCCCCLX

TO THE WIDOWED ELECTRESS OF BRANDENBURG

Luther thanks her for sending a pastor to Brettin.

February 10, 1544.

To the Serene High-born Princess Frau Elizabeth of the royal line of Denmark. Grace and peace! I was delighted to see from your Grace's letter that you are willing to appoint M. Johannes Faber to a living in Brettin. Your Electoral Highness has thereby done a good work, and as they know him there, I hope they will accept him out of gratitude, and that he will bring forth fruit, and God give His blessing thereto. It is ever my

duty, and I am only too willing to serve your Grace. May the dear God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Electoral Highness at all times. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCC LXI

TO FRIEDRICH MYCONIUS

This letter shows Luther's opinion of the combatant at Gotha.

February 23, 1544.

Grace and peace ! Forgive a short letter, dear Friedrich. More again when I have more leisure. Yours, telling me that you were faithfully fulfilling the duties of your office in reconciling Morlin with the Arnstadt people, gave me the greatest pleasure. For this misunderstanding placed me most awkwardly at a time when unanimity and prayer are so necessary. Do not trouble consulting me, for I am quite satisfied with your mediation. Whomsoever you forgive is forgiven by me. I quite believe some preachers are too ready to flare up, but I also know that in towns there are many despotic people, and very many nobles who torment their pastors. More of this again. I wish you were stronger, but when you feel you cannot speak, I beseech you think of your health. It is better that you should live, even if half dumb, than die with a clear voice. You can, even if half dead, serve the Church through your counsel and position. And you must see how necessary are the old and tried combatants for Christ, that through them the growing and still tender generations, who are one day to fill our place, may receive strength. For although the Holy Spirit does not need our help, still it was not for no purpose that He called us to office, but to make us His tools to carry out His designs. Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Myconius's *Life*, by Ledderhose.)

CCCC LXII

TO THE ELECTRESS SIBYLLA OF SAXONY

Luther comforts her under her husband's absence at Speyer.

March 30, 1544.

To the Serene High-born Princess and Lady, etc. My most gracious lady, grace and peace! I would most humbly thank your Electoral Grace for asking so particularly after my health and about my wife and children, and also for all your good wishes. God be thanked that things are much better with us than we deserve.

That my head should at times be good for nothing is not to be wondered at. Old age brings many ailments with it. The pitcher that goes long to the well breaks at last. I have lived long enough. God grant me a peaceful end, so that the useless, moth-eaten carcase may come under ground to its people, and the worms not be done out of their due. Just watch. I have seen the best I shall ever see upon earth, for it looks as if evil times were at hand. God help His own! Amen. That your Royal Highness finds herself very solitary in the absence of her husband I can easily understand, but seeing it is necessary for the good of Christianity, we must patiently submit to the Divine Will. And with others we have our dear God's Word, which comforts and sustains us in this life, and promises us blessedness in the life to come. And we have also prayer, which (as your Grace writes) we know is well pleasing to God, and will be heard at the right time. Two such unspeakable gems neither devil, Turk, nor Pope can have, and thus they are poorer than any beggar upon earth. For these great blessings we must thank God, the Father of all mercies in Christ Jesus, His dear Son, that He has given us such a costly treasure, and called us through His grace, unworthy as we are, to such an inheritance, so that we may not only be able to endure patiently the passing evils of this blinded, miserable world, but may have compassion on those exalted heads who have not been considered worthy to partake of such grace. May God yet enlighten them, so that they also may, with

us, see, know, and understand it. Amen. My Käthie offers her poor paternoster on your behalf, and humbly thanks your Electoral Grace for so kindly thinking of her. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen. Your Royal Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXXIII

TO KING CHRISTIAN OF DENMARK

Luther requests Peutinger's removal from Sweden.

April 12, 1544.

To the Mighty Serene High-born Prince Christian of Denmark, Holstein, etc. Grace and peace and my poor paternoster, mighty and gracious king! The poor forsaken wife, Katherine Peutinger, has asked me to write your Majesty about this matter. There is a wicked scoundrel with the King of Sweden who calls himself Dr. Peutinger, and through his lies and arts is now Chancellor, and I hear lives like a lord. This same rascal is a furrier's son at Frankfort-on-Main, is no doctor, and has wandered through the land practising all sorts of knavery, among which is this, that he married Frau Katherine, of good family, living with her openly, and deserted her some years ago, leaving her destitute. Over and above, he boasts that he has been divorced from her (which is not true) through Dr. Luther and M. Philip, and has married another—of the Köckeritz family—who is now with him in Sweden. Now His Majesty has been written to on the subject, and I also have written him, but the fellow knows how to make away with letters. Therefore the only hope of reaching His Majesty of Sweden is through your Majesty. Hence it is my most humble request that you would perform this work of mercy, and graciously see to it that those letters come into the hands of the King of Sweden, for no one doubts that did His Swedish Majesty know the truth concerning this rascal, he would see that he got justice. May your Majesty graciously take this, my humble petition, in good part. I could not refuse to write you, for the matter is notorious, both land and people

being able to vouch for its truth, and the poor wife has almost to beg her bread of penury from her friends. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen. Your Majesty's obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCCLXIV

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther purposes visiting Amsdorf.

May 23, 1544.

Grace and peace! It is not necessary, most esteemed father in the Lord, to send an escort to meet me. I intend travelling over our Prince's lands by Grimma and Borna. When I leave Borna (close to my villa Zulsdorf) for Zeitz I shall let you know. I purposed leaving the Monday after Exaudi, but as there is to be a creation of doctors that week I must alter my plans. But I shall start as secretly as possible the Wednesday after Ascension if my health, years, and time permit. Farewell, and pray that nothing may prevent my longed-for journey. I am telling no one, and do you the same. I once more commit you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1536.)

CCCCCLXV

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Journey deferred.

June 4, 1544.

Grace and peace in the Lord! I was resolved to be in Leipsic to-day, whence I would have written regarding the escort, as I never dreamed of being sent to Dibon. I purposed travelling to Leipsic in one day. If my letter which Dr. Brück handed to the Prince's messenger has not arrived, I must inform you that the Prince himself will be in Zeitz in fifteen days, when Dr. Brück and I shall meet you.

Dr. Brück has told me this by the Prince's desire, so we must obey him, else the Prince might fancy we slighted his wishes. I hope this may hasten rather than delay my

journey, so you must have patience. Dr. Brück thinks it unsafe to travel at present, as the peasants are again seized with a fresh paroxysm of rage against the Prince, and it is feared they intend assaulting him, so we must not tempt God. May Christ prosper our meeting. Farewell. Late on evening I received your letter.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, v. 21. 1625.)

CCCCXLVI

TO HIERONYMUS BAUMGÄRTNER'S WIFE

Luther comforts her under her husband's imprisonment.

July 8, 1544.

Grace and peace in our dear Saviour, honoured and virtuous lady! God, who hears my sighs, knows how I grieve over your misfortunes. Yes, all feel deeply for the good man who has fallen into the hands of the enemy. May God hear our prayers and those of all pious hearts. For many supplications are ascending for him, and such prayers are always answered, being agreeable to God. Meantime let us comfort ourselves with the Divine assurance that He will never forsake His own. The Psalms are full of this, and we know that our Hausherr is strong in the faith that is in Christ Jesus, being adorned with many lovely fruits of the same. Therefore it is impossible that God should cast him from His presence, having called him through His sacred Word, so He will ever keep him under His protection. He is the same God who has protected him all his life long till this misfortune befell him, and remains the same, although for a little He may appear otherwise to try our faith and patience. He said in John, "Ye shall weep and lament," etc. And our sufferings are nothing in comparison to those of His dear Son. We would not be true Christians if we did not suffer with Christ. The devil and his angels, who now rejoice over our misfortunes, will one day have to howl and weep, while ours will be the glorious assurance that "all things work together for good to those who love God." Therefore, dear lady, suffer and be patient, for you do not suffer

alone. Many godly hearts sympathise with you, who will fulfil Matt. xxv. 43: "In prison, and ye visited me." Yes, truly, thousands of us visit dear Baumgärtner in captivity—that is, we cry unto the Lord, who is taken captive in His member, that He would deliver him, and let us all rejoice with you. May the same Lord Jesus comfort and strengthen your heart, through His Spirit, in a patient endurance to a blessed conclusion of this misfortune and all misfortunes, to whom be praise and honour and glory to all eternity. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCC LXVII

TO PRINCE JOHN OF ANHALT

Luther just home from Zeitz, weak and weary.

August 27, 1544.

Grace and peace in the Lord, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! I would gladly come to Bernburg, but have just returned from Zeitz, so tired of driving that I can neither walk nor stand, and scarcely even sit, from which I augur the speedy approach of death. May God graciously help. Therefore I must keep quiet and rest till I improve, whether through life or death, as God wills it. May our dear Lord Jesus impart to my gracious Prince George¹ the rich spirit of grace to rule his bishopric, for there has been much to do, and the work has been much neglected by the former Bishops. But He who has begun will perfect the work. Amen. Commending you to the dear God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCC LXVIII

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

A letter of thanks.

August 27, 1544.

Honoured Father in the Lord—In the first place make my excuses to your steward. I was most anxious

¹ Luther, on August 2, 1545, ordained Prince George to the bishopric of Merseburg.

for him to return when we reached Borna, and still more so when we came to Eulenburg, for then I was almost at my own door, but he persisted in accompanying me to Wittenberg. And I must accuse you also of having borne the whole expenses of the journey, so that I have not spent a farthing. And your episcopal possessions are not as yet so great that you can afford to be so lavish. In addition you have, unknown to me, put a silver cup and spoon, as did the patriarch Jacob's host, thereby almost making me the thief of your belongings against my will, perhaps wishing to follow Joseph's example, who caused his cup to be placed in his brother Benjamin's sack. But you are aware how ill it befits me, a poor divine, born and living in a small place, to drink out of gold or silver, thus giving cause of offence to many of the enemies of the Word among ourselves. Should I become lifted up thereby, I shall blame your injudicious prodigality. Thank you very warmly for your kindness, and if the prayers of an old sinner have any power, they shall not be wanting on your behalf, although it is my duty to remember you at all times, without any presents, according to the Divine command and the extreme need of all of us. Farewell in the Lord, and may He guide your steps and prosper the work of your hands to the benefit of many. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCCLXIX

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther wishes Dr. Jonas to be left at Halle.

November 8, 1544.

Grace and peace and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! My dear friend Dr. Jonas is here and has told me all, so I give him this letter, with my humble opinion of the matter. In the first place, the lectureship must be filled up at once, as was arranged, and no one can presume to interfere with the manner in which your Grace does it. But as Dr. Jonas cannot, without injury to the church at Halle, be removed,

it is advisable to let him remain there, as the wicked worm in Mayence still lives, who must be kept in constant uneasiness so long as Jonas is there, who deprives him of his adherents and annoys him more than he likes. This is how the matter stands, if your Electoral Grace will only permit him to remain at Halle, giving him for eight or nine years 140 florins yearly. My dear Dr. Brück has also written about this to your Grace, and Dr. Jonas will give you the letter, so if it be settled that he be set free from his chair, your Grace will graciously grant him the said number of florins for these years. He will always be ready to obey any call hither, as member of the Theological Faculty, not only in the service of your Grace, but of the whole University, for he does not wish to be loosed from the University here, and Halle would gladly fall in with this arrangement. Therefore I humbly request your Grace to accede to this, for he is now one of the oldest members (Dieners) both in church and schools, and is worthy of this, and far more, and who knows how God will requite it. His children are growing up, and there is much to consider. Your Grace will know how to act in a gracious and Christian manner. I commend you to the dear God. Saturday. Your Electoral Grace's humble servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCLXX

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH

Luther complains of overwork and old age.

December 2, 1544.

You are always urging me to write a little book upon Church Discipline, but you do not say where I am to find leisure and strength to do so, now that I am an old and worn-out man. And I am burdened with letter-writing without end; besides, I promised the young princes a sermon upon drunkenness. I have promised others to write upon secret engagements and against the Sacramentarians; while again some demand I should leave everything else alone and write a commentary upon

the whole Bible, while meantime, with so many importunities, I do nothing.

I fancied that I, a used-up old man, would not have been grudged a little quiet and peace before I fell asleep. But thus I am pressed on all sides to lead a life of worry. But I shall do what I can, and the rest must be left undone. Many thanks for all your kind feelings towards me. May you prosper in the Lord, and pray for me, as I do for you all. I am sorry to hear that Dr. Daniel (Gresser) is thinking of leaving the flock at Dresden. May the Lord do what pleaseth Him. Greet your dearest wife from me.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCXXI

TO JACOB PROBST

Luther complains of bad times, and speaks of his daughter's illness.

December 5, 1544.

Grace and peace in the Lord ! I shall write you very shortly, my dear Probst, to let you hear from me in case you might fancy I had forgotten you or did not esteem you. I am weary, tired, and chilled ; in short, an old man who is of no more use. I have run my race, and nothing now remains but that I should be gathered to my fathers, and the worms and corruption receive their prey. I have lived long enough, if this be life. Pray for me that the hour of my departure may be well pleasing to God and salutary for me.

The Emperor and the whole kingdom does not concern me, except that I commend them to God in prayer.

It appears to me as if the world itself were approaching its end, and, as the Psalm says, waxing old like a garment that is soon to be renewed. Amen. The Princes are no longer inspired with the courage and virtues of heroes, but are filled with godless hatred and discord, greed and selfishness. The State can no longer boast of possessing men, and its head and members resemble those described by Isaiah in the third chapter of his prophecies.

So there is nothing good to hope for, except that the day of our great God and our redemption should speedily dawn.

My daughter Margaretha thanks you for your gift. She, along with all her brothers, took measles, but the latter are well long ago, while she has been combating an attack of fever for ten weeks, and it is still doubtful whether she may recover. I shall not rebel against God if He take her to Himself, away from this devilish world, from which may He soon release me and mine. I long for this every day, and to see an end of the fury of Satan and his followers.

Farewell in the Lord Jesus Christ. A greeting to you and yours from my Käthie and all our folks.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Schütze.)

CCCCLXXII

WRITTEN IN NICOLAS ŒMLER'S BIBLE

To my good old friend, Nicolas Œmler, who more than once carried me in his arms to and from school, neither of us then being aware that one brother-in-law carried another. Anno 1544. MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCLXXIII

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther promises to visit him again.

December 27, 1544.

Grace and peace, most worthy Bishop in Christ! I write this letter to Dr. Medler about the theological lectureship, of which you kindly reminded me, and I fancy you will find it easier to send it to him than I, as at present there is a scarcity of messengers. Moreover, I have firmly decided, if at all possible, to come to you at the Leipsic Fair, for head and feet are pretty well just now considering my years.

Through the grace of God I have preached twice

during the Feast without any difficulty, far beyond my hopes and the hopes of others.

We hear of all sorts of dangers which are to be dreaded from the peasants, who have become bolder through the Emperor's successes, and think they can achieve something even against the will of the Prince. But should I not be able to come to Leipsic, could you tell me where we could meet—either in the Eulenburg Castle (which we can easily get from the Herzog), or at Herr Theodore von Schopfeldt's in Wiltow, between Leipsic and Dibon, or if you know a more suitable spot tell me?

I should like to see Leipsic again, but perhaps, for certain reasons, you do not care to go there.

Our meeting could easily be arranged somewhere in our neighbourhood. I write to you early, as, if my journey be prevented, which I would not like, another place could be arranged. Farewell, dearest brother in Christ and most honoured Bishop, because of your great services to the Church.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1535.)

CCCCLXXIV

TO NICOLAS MEDLER

Luther offers his friend a post.

December 27, 1544.

Grace and peace in the Lord! I do not at present, dear Medler, most honoured sir, comfort you under your heavy cross, with which the Lord has crucified you. But the Lord and Saviour is good and kind. You know this well, and tell others that our Heavenly Father, whose goodness is infinite, and whose will is always the best, although the flesh and reason cannot see it, is only chastising us, that we may learn how good and loving the Lord is. And this can never be learned aright unless the flesh be lacerated in every way, so that the spirit may be driven to sigh and long to see the Lord in the land of the living.

This is God's way of teaching, but it is to be hoped it may not be much needed by you. And now I have something to tell you. The highly esteemed and much

loved of God and man, Nicolas Amsdorf, bishop, has written me that there is a theological lectureship vacant in Naumburg, which he desires you to fill.

Therefore I beg of you, if possible, at once to accept the post, for your reputation merits it, or to answer by return, that I may appoint some one else.

I write very briefly, as I have much to do, for it is only a few days since I was raised from the dead. I have preached twice since, with no difficulty, which has been a wonder to many. May you and yours prosper, and be assured that all of us have been plunged in almost as deep grief as yourself over the loss of your dear son of such high promise.

But he has been taken away from the evil so that he might not become corrupted. God's ways are other than ours, and at all times far better. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1340.)

1545

The Diet of Worms was held during this year. Charles V. was present, but none of the Wittenberg theologians. Spalatin died January 16. First part of Luther's book, *Against the Papacy in Rome, Founded by the Devil*, appeared. Lukas Cranach at once issued a series of woodcuts, turning the Pope into ridicule. The Zurich divines issued a treatise on the sacrament. Luther, in reading Calvin's pamphlet on the subject, said the author must be a learned and pious man, and if Œcolampadius and Zwingli had so expressed themselves, no discussion would have arisen. Luther was a great sufferer this year, and this may be why he took a gloomy view of life and left Wittenberg, intending never to return, and telling his wife to sell their house. Dr. Brück tried to console the Elector by saying the house-selling might be a slow process. The Elector wrote Luther a beautiful letter, still extant, lamenting that he had not let him know his intention, in order that he might at least have supplied him with money for the journey. Luther was softened at once, and returned with Melancthon and Bugenhagen, who had been sent by the University to bring him back. In November Luther concluded his ten years' course of lectures on Genesis, saying, "May our Lord God send some one after me to expound them better. I can do no more, for I am weak. Pray God to grant me a blessed release."

CCCCCLXXV

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Projected visitation in Naumburg.

January 9, 1545.

Grace and peace in Christ! The Lord bless you out of Zion, and grant you your heart's desire, honoured father in Christ. Go on in the name of the Lord, attending thoroughly to the duties of your office, and doing the work of a bishop, to which you are called, by at least visiting the churches under your jurisdiction, over which you have full authority. The Lord be with you. When this or that "centaur" objects to you holding a visitation, then you are not to blame, but as the Gospel teaches, shake the dust from off your feet over them. I shall alter the preface to the book on Visitation, but it will take time. As soon as the printers return from the fair (*Messe*) I shall arrange with Johann Luft and the booksellers to set to work. Later it may be found that some alterations must be made because of the Naumburg bishopric constitution, and of the dissimilarity of the circumstances. It was after the visitation our people first issued the visitors' *Book on the Visitation*. And it will be no great hardship for the clergy themselves although they do not get copies at once.

I have seen the Pope's Bull, and consider it a farce. They say at Court that the Pope has brought a singular monstrosity into the world, and that he will soon openly worship the Sultan, and even the devil, before he will improve matters, or act according to the Word of God. We have had abundant proof of this already. But the Lord Jesus, who slays His enemy by the Word of His mouth, will overthrow him through the splendour of His appearing. Still I shall never cease to portray this *Bestie* to the life, if I live long enough to do so. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1537.)

CCCCCLXXVI

TO THE ELECTOR JOACHIM II. OF BRANDENBURG

Warning against the Jews and petition for the sons of Buchholzer, Provost of Berlin.

March 9, 1545.

Grace and peace in the Lord, and my poor prayers, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! The highly esteemed Herr George Buchholzer, Provost in Berlin, gave me your gracious greeting, and wonders that I have not written you. He tells me also that you wish me to write against the double-dealers. Many thanks for your gracious greeting. But your Grace must not impute my not writing to any unwillingness to do so; for, I have no ill-feeling to any one on earth, and I pray daily for you princes and lords, as St. Paul inculcates in 1 Tim. chap. ii. For I see how trying it is to be a ruler in those scandalous times when there is so much treachery among those in power; and the Court devil is such a powerful lord, who causes so much dissension among kings and princes. Hence I had no cause to write your Grace, so you must not ascribe it to ill-feeling, I have often said and preached that I have no ill-will even to the Archbishop of Mayence, not wishing him even an hour of my catarrh, although I make furious onslaughts on him, as I do not like to see him hurrying on to hell, as if he feared he might arrive too late if he went at an ordinary pace. But warning is vain there. I fear your Grace may fall a prey to some of the Jews' tricks, but as you have such confidence in them, I know no credence will be given to my warning. Therefore I pray God to protect your Grace and the young Margrave from their wiles, that your trust may not be betrayed, to our great sorrow. I am glad that the Provost is so severe on those Jews, which is a proof of his loyalty to your Grace; and I encourage him to continue in the path he has chosen, for this practising of alchemy is a disgraceful deception, for all know money cannot be made by such sophistry.

Herr George has also asked me to request your

Grace graciously to grant a bursary to his two sons for the prosecution of their theological studies, for it would be a pity should they be forced to give them up. In short, your Grace must not consider me an enemy ; but I cannot believe that your Grace really imagines that the Jews are dealing uprightly with you, and the alchemists are certainly befooling you, that they may gain all, and your Grace nothing. I herewith commit you, with the young Princes, to the dear God. Your obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCCLXXVII

TO THE HERZOG ALBRECHT OF PRUSSIA

Luther introduces the son of an East Prussian Grand Ducal Counsellor to the Herzog. Von Kunheim's son, George, married Luther's daughter, Margaretta, in 1555, and took her to East Prussia, where she and her children lie buried in her husband's burying-ground of Muhlhausen, 12 miles from Königsberg.

May 2, 1545.

Grace and peace in the Lord, Most Serene High-born Prince ! Albrecht von Kunheim has requested me to write to your Electoral Highness. Although I had nothing special to say, I seize this opportunity to do so in introducing Albrecht von Kunheim to you. Although I have nothing new to communicate I know your Grace has always great patience with my letters. One says the Turk is approaching, another that he will remain outside. But one thing is certain, neither Emperor, King, nor Princes make any preparations. The Emperor is beginning to persecute the gospel vehemently in the Netherlands. May God avert his wrath. Amen. The Bishop of Cologne remains steadfast by the grace of God. The Count Palatine Frederick has embraced the gospel with us, and the Electress has publicly partaken of the sacrament with us, this Easter, in both forms. To God be the praise and glory, and may He strengthen them all. Amen. The Papal monstrosity continues to mock the Emperor and empire with the promise of a council, which has again

been deferred till Michaelmas ; but it is said in Ferrara that it will be a very long time till then, and for once these liars have spoken the truth, for a council is a thing they will never suffer to all eternity. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen. I also commend this von Kunheim to your Grace as a most superior young man, who was highly thought of in Wittenberg. Your Electoral Highness's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCCLXXVIII

TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OF HALLE

Luther's celebrated letter to the Halle Town Council, in which he admonishes them to persevere in their zeal for, and loyalty to the gospel.

May 7, 1545.

Grace and peace in the Lord, honoured and circum-spect gentlemen and good friends! I have talked over your affairs with my dear friend, Dr. Jonas, and I was delighted to hear from him that the church in Halle is increasing and flourishing, through the blessing of the Holy Ghost ; that the people behave well ; and that the teachers are united among themselves, being of one heart and mouth, while the Council is favourable to the gospel. May the merciful Father of all joy and harmony graciously maintain this blessing among you, and perfect the work He has begun in you against that day.

It is a very precious thing when a town can, with one accord, sing "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" For I daily see how very rare such a gift is, both in town and country. Therefore I could not refrain from expressing to you my joy, and also admonishing you, as St. Paul did the Thessalonians, to continue as you are doing, and not be weary in well-doing, but ever increase in strength. For we know Satan is against us, as he cannot bear to see God's work prosper, but goes about seeking whom he may devour. So we must watch and pray, that we may

not be surprised by him. For we are not ignorant of his devices, and how he carried them out upon Moritzburg and at Aschenburg; and just now he has blessed, or rather cursed, two nuns (God will redeem their souls). All this proves the mischief he is anxious to do. Therefore I have pled earnestly with my dear Dr. Jonas, that he would try to keep church, council, preachers, and schools closely united, so that through earnest prayer you may withstand the devil, and prevent him doing further mischief, which Dr. Jonas has up till now faithfully done. I hereby commit preachers, sacristans, and schools to your Christian love, especially Dr. Jonas, from whom we were most unwilling to part. I especially, for I would gladly always have him beside me. We daily experience how precious such faithful, pure preachers are. They are very dear to God Himself, who says "the labourers are few." Therefore He commands them to be treated with double honour, and acknowledged as a peculiar gift of God, with which He honours the world, as the 68th Psalm sings, "Thou hast received gifts for men, . . . that the Lord might dwell among them." And it is no small gift that God has given you the heart to call such men, and love, cherish, and honour them.

In many places such men would be lightly esteemed, and be obliged to go elsewhere, nay, even be compelled to flee. Afterwards, when too late, they see what they have done, and think of the proverb, "I know what I have, but do not know what I may get."

It is easy to make a change, but to improve matters is always dubious. May the Father of our dear Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you against the wickedness of Satan, and preserve you from his cunning devices, and at length give you ease and relief from the insidious attacks of flesh and blood. Amen. Your Excellencies' obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCCLXXIX

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther writes about a peculiar kind of fox, and concerning the conduct of the authorities of Nürnberg.

June 3, 1545.

Grace and peace in the Lord, honoured father in Christ! I have communicated your opinion of this prodigy among foxes to those conversant with the hunt, and they, to begin with, said it could not be true. But when they saw your letter, they were greatly astonished, and all agreed in saying that the fox is sly enough not to harm the spot where he has his lair, and adduced as a proof of this that when they make their nest (*nisteln*) in the moat round the town, they do no injury.

I do not know what all this portends, except it be that a mighty change, for which we long and pray, is imminent. Amen. I am not concerning myself about the Reichstag and councils. I believe in nothing, I hope for nothing, and think of nothing. All is vanity of vanities. The Nürnberg people have taken a certain nobleman prisoner in order to procure the release of their Baumgärtner. If God do not step into the breach, this seems to be a spark sent to kindle a great fire in the future, for the punishment of the German lands. But God will remove us before then. There is no justice and no government in the land, which is, in very deed, only the dregs and end of the kingdom.

Your nephew George has showed me the painting of the Pope. But Meister Lukas is a coarse artist. He might have spared the female sex for the sake of God's creatures and our mothers. Otherwise he might have painted the Pope more worthily, that is, representing him in a more diabolic form. But you can judge better in the Lord. Farewell in Christ.

MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—The Emperor has ordered the Augsburg people again to restore the Cardinal and the principal bishops, along with the clergy and the Papal ceremonies. But they will defend themselves by force of arms if necessary. The

priests do not desire peace, nor do they even wish to enjoy their own in peace.

(Walch, v. 21.)

CCCCCLXXX

TO ANDREAS OSIANDER, PREACHER IN NÜRNBERG

A letter of consolation.

June 3, 1545.

Grace and peace in Christ, who is our consolation and our very own, even as we are His, "for whether we live or die," as St. Paul says, "we are the Lord's." We have heard, my excellent Osiander, that you have again been visited by a cross, and a twofold cross, through the deaths of your dear wife and beloved daughter. I, too, know from the death of my dearest child how great must be your grief. I often marvel that I am unable to forget the loss of my Lenchen, although I know she is in the regions above, in the new life, saved and redeemed, and that God has thereby given me a true token of His love in having, during my life, taken my flesh and blood to His Fatherly heart. But this love of which I speak is only natural love, which, although good and natural, must still be crucified with us, so that the gracious will of God may be done. For which cause His dear Son, through whom and by whom all things exist, freely gave His life, unto the death. I write all this to testify that we are partakers in your trial, even as God has made you true and faithful participants of our faith and doctrine. Thus you must yield up your Isaac as a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour to God; not your daughter nor your wife, for these live and are happy in the Lord, but that natural strong and imperious love which asserts itself too powerfully in us. Farewell, and believe that we love you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

CCCCCLXXXI

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther wrote this letter while in great suffering.

June 15, 1545.

Many thanks, my honoured father, for the present of

wine. I neither slept nor rested the whole of last night, the pain caused by Satan's executioner was so intense. Hence I am good for nothing to-day, and the pain has not yet gone; for, this thorn in my flesh still lies concealed in my body, but not without letting itself be felt. I do not know when I shall get rid of it, for I abhor this agony. Nevertheless, if it be the will of the good God that I should depart amid such pain, He will give grace to bear it, and if not to pass away pleasantly, still to die cheerfully.

Enough of this. If I live I shall see that the painter, Lukas Cranach, exchanges this indecent painting for a more becoming one.

I had commenced the second part of the book against the Papacy, and also the pamphlet against the Sacramentarians when, behold, I am seized by my illness. Would to God that the Pope and all the Cardinals had a taste of what I suffer, so that they may learn that they are human. Farewell in Christ. Your devoted

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1546.)

CCCCXXXII

TO ANTON LAUTERBACH

Luther desires him to inquire about a youth who was wooing his niece in Wittenberg.

July 5, 1545.

My beloved brother in the Lord, there is a certain youth here, my Anton, who calls himself Ernest Peuchter, from beyond Dresden. This individual has made up to the widow of Ambrosius Bernardi, my niece Magdalena, and has won her with grand-sounding words, so that it looks as if under the pretext of marriage he was after her little bit of money. Since hearing this I have been very uneasy, for it seems to me as if this unknown and very young fellow (under twenty) is preparing a pitfall for me; for, without consulting us, or producing a testimonial from his parents or guardians, he is trying to delude the poor foolish woman. Therefore, I beseech you, find out about his parents and guardians, and what are their means, and

especially if they know what he is after. For he may have written that he has the run of my house and my consent. Tell them this is a lie, for we shall oppose it with all our might. For this proposal would suit neither the one nor the other ; and I would like the parents to recall their son before I am driven to harder measures, for my office will not permit that he, without his parents' knowledge, should enter the married state in this church, much less with my niece, as years ago I condemned the lawyers in a similar case. Therefore write me minutely. For I shall prevent this marriage under the pretext that up till now he has not got his father's consent, and thereby sets my authority at naught. And thus I shall elude the devil, who wishes to make me and my church a laughing-stock. Farewell, and do as I wish.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1548.)

CCCCCLXXXIII

TO JOHN LANGE

Luther writes respecting private engagements, and the partaking of the sacrament.

July 14, 1545.

My best beloved Lange, grace and peace in Christ ! I am very much pleased with your views on private engagements, not only because you are on our side, but because your university,¹ which is in high repute, shares our opinions, which must be a trial to the Papists, who were not aware of the side your school took, and may now fancy others are of the same way of thinking. Be courageous for the truth, for this is the path to heaven.

Regarding the other question you are right. Those who aspire to be Christians should confess, at least once in the year, that they belong to Christ, although all through life they should do so. But they who excuse themselves by saying they feel no need of it, thereby show they have conceived a nausea of the grace of God and of the heavenly manna, being spiritually dead, and are longing for the foods of Egypt, and therefore cannot be considered Christians any

¹ Erfurt.

longer. Those again who as a pretext for not communicating adduce the prolonged war, these also cannot be exonerated, because at any moment they may become the prey of death ; and what would they then do in the face of death ? Would war and disputes not be placed in the background ? For the soul meantime cannot be left without faith, without Christ, and without the Word ; therefore such pretexts as war, etc., would not hold valid then. Thus they deny Christ and the faith, for through war and disputes all these things are hindered. I also have had much dissension with the Papists, as well as with the lawyers here, for a year past, and have appealed to the Elector, but this has not prevented me, nay, it has rather caused me, to partake oftener of the sacrament. You have now my opinion.

But you, with your gifts, know much better how to act in this matter than I. May you be blessed in Christ, and pray for me, a dying sack of worms !

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXXXIV

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Luther writes about a gathering of ecclesiastics at Trent and an embassy to the Sultan.

July 17, 1545.

Grace and peace in the Lord ! I am not at all disquieted, most honoured in Christ, at what has taken place. All say no attention must be paid to dreams, and the Scriptures teach this also, unless one be a prophet (Numbers chap. xii.). But this sacristan is no prophet, and I saw the Prince's statue in wood in Lukas's house before it was erected in Torgau. It is no wonder it fell, but rather a marvel that it has stood so long. Every one said it would fall next day, even without wind, so badly was it put together.

They write from Trent that twenty-three bishops and three cardinals are there, and are so idle that they know not what to do. The Bishop of Mayence, the knave of knaves, has sent an under-bishop, along with a certain African, there. I know not whether he means to ridicule them or us by this laughable embassy, such a great man

to send such people to so many distinguished men. But the Council is worthy of such an abortion. Their courage will ooze away when God's wrath descends upon them. Now listen to this. The Pope, the Emperor, Francis, and Ferdinand have sent a gorgeous embassy to the Sultan laden with precious gifts to sue for peace, and the best of it is each has discarded his paternal costume and donned long coats such as the Turks wear, in order not to be an offence in his eyes. It is said they sailed from Venice on June 21.

These are the people who hitherto decried the Turk as the enemy of Christianity, and under this pretext extorted money and roused their lands against the Turks.

And the Roman Satan has, through no end of devices, robbed the people through indulgences and exhausted the world. Oh, can these be Christians? Nay, they are rather the devil's demons. I hope this is a joyful sign of the end of the world. So long as they worship the Turk we shall pray to the true God, who will hear us and humiliate the Turk, along with themselves, through His glorious appearing. Amen. Your most devoted

MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1551.)

CCCCCLXXXV

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE (FROM LEIPSIK)

Luther writes asking his wife to sell his house, and retire to Zulsdorf.

July 28, 1545.

Grace and peace, dear Käthie! Hans will give you all the details of our journey; but as I am not yet sure whether I shall not keep him with me, then Dr. Caspar Cruciger and Ferdinand will give you all the particulars. Ernest von Schönfeldt entertained us most hospitably at Lößnitz, and Hainz Scherle still more royally at Leipsic. I would gladly arrange not to return to Wittenberg. My heart is so cooled towards the place that I do not care to live there any longer, so I would like you to sell garden, land, house, and courtyard; and then I shall restore the large house to my most gracious lord, and it would be your best plan to retire to Zulsdorf while I am in life, and

could help you to improve the property with my income. For I trust my most gracious lord would continue my salary for at least one year of my closing life. For after my death the four elements will not suffer you to remain in Wittenberg; therefore it would be better to do during my life what would be necessary afterwards. Perhaps the powers at Wittenberg may eventually find themselves seized not with St. Vitus's dance, nor with St. John's, but with the beggar's dance, now that they are permitting the wives and maidens to expose their necks and shoulders before and behind, and no one forbids it, thereby bringing the Word of God into derision.

Only to get away and clear of this Sodom! I have heard more in the country of the proceedings in Wittenberg than there; hence I am weary of the town, and shall not return, God helping me.

The day after to-morrow I drive to Merseburg, where Prince George has warmly urged me to come. Therefore I shall wander hither and thither, and rather eat the bread of penury than make my last days miserable through the disorderly proceedings at Wittenberg, with the loss of all my hard work. Do as you like about letting Dr. Pommer and Magister Philip know of this, and if Dr. Pommer herewith pronounces a blessing on Wittenberg I have no objection, for I cannot control my indignation and grief any longer. I herewith commit you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCCLXXXVI

TO SOME ONE UNKNOWN

Caution against worrying over the doctrine of election. Luther ordained Prince George of Anhalt as Bishop of Merseburg on August 2, and preached there and at Halle, where his colleagues overtook him.

August 8, 1545.

My dear friend N. tells me that at times you are tempted to doubt the decrees of God's eternal providence, and requested me to write you on the subject. No doubt this is a severe temptation, but we must remember that

we are forbidden to inquire into such mysteries. For what God desires to keep secret we must not wish to know ; because this was the apple, the eating of which brought death to Adam and Eve, with all their posterity. Even as murder, theft, and swearing are sins, so it is also sinful to try to investigate such matters, and the devil is at the root of this, as he is of all other sins.

On the other hand, God has given us His Son Jesus Christ, whom we should make our example, daily meditating on Him, which will cause God's decrees to assume a most lovely aspect in our eyes. For without Christ everything is vanity, death, and the devil ; but with Him all is pure peace and joy. For if a man is constantly tormenting himself as to the decrees of Providence, he only reaps anxious forebodings. Therefore eschew such thoughts as coming from the serpent in paradise, and instead look at Christ. May God preserve you.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCCLXXXVII

TO PRINCE GEORGE OF ANHALT

Letter of consolation.

August 9, 1545.

Grace and peace in Christ, who is our sole consolation and Saviour ! Most Serene High-born Prince—I have been informed of the serious accident which has befallen your Grace's consort, for which I am deeply grieved. May Christ cause it to conduce to our release from such troubles. But her ladyship must remember that she is still here below with all the saints, in this valley of tribulation, and has not yet attained to our eternal Fatherland, which we hope to reach. Therefore we cannot expect to be better off than our brethren in the world, who sail in the same ship with us, who suffer at the hands of the devil from the winds and the storms. We have no cause of offence against him if he be the means of making us cleave closer to Christ. Your Grace must not be too timid to do this. We have a God who can arrange everything better than we can conceive, and give far more than we could

ever dream of. Let us commit ourselves to Him, putting our affairs into the hands of Him who careth for us, as St. Peter admonishes. And David, too, tells us to commit our way unto the Lord; and if we do not do this then our cares are in vain, for our fruitless worrying only prevents God from caring for us. May my dear Lord Jesus comfort and strengthen your Grace through His Holy Spirit to do and to suffer His holy will. Amen. I offer my poor paternoster on your behalf, and wish you and my gracious lord, Prince Joachim, all that is good, and thank both of you for the game. MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCCLXXXVIII

TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OF TORGAU

Luther sends a petition on behalf of their pastor, Gabriel Zwilling.

August 18, 1545.

To the honoured and wise citizens and Council of Torgau. My gracious lords and friends, grace and peace in the Lord! Your pastor, M. Gabriel, has begged me to present this petition for him. He having received a present of one cask of beer from the honoured Council, and having purchased two in addition, and being obliged to purchase a fourth, we desire that the fourth should also be a gift. Although I am sure he could have got this without my intervention, he wished me to intercede for him. As the honoured town and Council know how long and faithfully he has served, and has enlarged his house without any special assistance, I beg of you to present him with the fourth cask of beer also. For he is one who should receive twofold honour, as St. Paul inculcates. I would not ask this did I not know it could be easily granted. I am ever ready to help the Council in any way. I herewith commit you to the dear God. MARTIN LUTHER.

P.S.—I fancy I have thanked the honoured Council (for in the multitude of my thoughts and business I forget) for the present of the cask of beer. If not, I now do so most warmly, for it was excellent.

CCCCLXXXIX

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK OF SAXONY

Luther returns thanks for generous presents.

November 8, 1545.

Grace and peace and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! Early this morning I received your Grace's handsome present, viz. a half cart of Suptitzer, the same of Gornberger,¹ four pitchers of Jena wine, in addition to three score carps and a hundredweight of pike—beautiful fish. It is far too much to send all at once. One of them would have been enough. Well, I render your Grace my most respectful thanks. Our Lord God will recompense your Highness. I do not know how to merit all the favours which your Grace daily so richly bestows upon me. But I shall do the best I can, according to my poor ability. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Amen. Your Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXC

TO KING CHRISTIAN OF DENMARK

Luther recommends a certain George Stur.

November 26, 1545.

Grace and peace in the Lord, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious King! Magister George Stur, a native of the principality of Schleswig, begged me to write you after receiving your Majesty's promise of a stipendium, part of which money he has received, and pleads that your Majesty would graciously remember him and complete the matter. For he has a very good name here, being pious and honest, a diligent student, and one from whom we expect much; therefore I could not refuse his request for a recommendation to you. Therefore I humbly plead that your Majesty would graciously keep him in remembrance, which would be a good work, well pleasing to God, who gives richly,

¹ Different kinds of wine.

and requites all that is done for Him. To Him I recommend your Majesty, along with the young Princes, land, and people, with the whole Government. Amen. Your devoted

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

P.S.—I have received your Majesty's gracious gift of 50 thalers through Dr. Pommer, and send my warmest thanks for it. May God reward you abundantly here and there.

CCCCXCI

TO COUNT ALBRECHT OF MANSFELD

Köstlin, in Luther's *Life*, says that Luther and Melanchthon spent Christmas in the Castle of Mansfeld, but Luther had to hurry home on account of Melanchthon's poor state of health. Luther preached in Halle on their way back.

December 6, 1545.

To the high and noble lord, Herr Albrecht, my gracious and dear lord. Grace and peace in the Lord, and my poor paternoster! Once more I intended being with you next Monday, as I previously announced, but I have this moment received a note from Graf Philip and Graf Hans George, in which, to my great joy, they graciously answered my last communication by requesting me to fix a day after the Leipsic Fair.

So once more I must remain here instead of spending Christmas at Mansfeld, as I intended. As they so politely request, I shall come after the Leipsic Fair to Mansfeld, leaving you two parties to name a day yourselves, and to say whom you wish to accompany me and to have with you. But I must have a margin of eight days, because there is so much to do, so that I may lie down joyfully in my coffin after I have seen my dear Lords reconciled to each other, and again one heart and one soul. I do not doubt but that your lordships will fulfil your promise and be glad to see these dissensions at an end. I herewith commit you to the dear God. Your obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

1546

Luther's last year. Diet of Regensburg opened in January. The Emperor conceded this to humour the Protestants till he was ready to compel them to submit to the Council's decrees. Luther's last undertaking was to reconcile the Counts of Mansfeld. He preached for the last time on February 14 at Eisleben. On 17th he signed a paper, and the Counts begged him to rest. At supper he was very bright, discussing death and everlasting life. After supper he was much oppressed, and Aurifaber fetched Countess Albrecht, who tried remedies. He slept till one, when Dr. Jonas tried to persuade him that the cold sweat he complained of was salutary. "No," he replied, "it is the cold sweat of death." He prayed constantly, and said three times in Latin, "God so loved the world," and Ps. lxxviii. 20, committing his spirit into God's hands. He died before three, in presence of Dr. Jonas, Cölius, Aurifaber, and his two sons.

CCCCXCII

TO THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK

Luther wishes Melanchthon to remain in Wittenberg.

January 9, 1546.

Grace and peace in Christ, and my poor paternoster, Most Serene High-born Prince, most gracious Lord! I ask respectfully whether it be necessary to send M. Philip to the present vain and fruitless discussion at Regensburg. For they have no man on their side who is worth anything, and Dr. Major is more than sufficient for all that is needed, even should he only be able to say "Yes" or "No" to what is being enacted. What would be done were Philip dead or ill, as he really is, so that I truly rejoice that I got him home alive from Mansfeld?¹ Hence he must now be spared, for he is of more use lying in bed here than at the Diet. He is willing to risk his life if it be desired, but who would counsel that? It would be a tempting of Providence. The young doctors must come to the front, for when we are gone they must proclaim the Word. As Dr. Major and others are able to

¹ A conclusive proof that they spent Christmas in Schloss Mansfeld.

preach and teach, it will be easy for them to dispute with such sophists, for they have daily to combat and withstand the devil himself. I respectfully write this for your Electoral Grace's consideration. May the Lord Christ make you act in accordance with his Divine will. Amen. Your Electoral Grace's obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXCIII

TO NICOLAS AMSDORF

Concerning the dispensing of unconsecrated wafers.

January 11, 1546.

Grace and peace in Christ! As Dr. Cruciger and Dr. Major are absent, Pommer and I must answer you. First. It is not heedlessness, but downright wickedness of that curate to declare that consecrated and unconsecrated wafers (*Hostien*) are the same. Let him go to his Zwinglians. It is not necessary that a man who is not one of us should be kept in prison, whose word, and even oath, cannot be believed. Further, he who has partaken of an unconsecrated wafer has not sinned; for his faith has saved him, because he believed that he received the true sacrament, and trusted in God's Word, just as he who believes is baptized, although he who baptizes him plays with the ordinance, or uses some other fluid for the purpose. But we need not discuss this so minutely, in case of inflaming unenlightened consciences. It is enough that all is possible to him who believes. Regarding adulterated wafers, it would be well to burn them, although really not necessary, because they are no sacrament except in their actual use. Even as baptismal water, except in its application in the rite, is no sacrament, even so Christ in this sacrament only operates on those who eat and believe. But on account of the scandal, the vicar has done well to burn it. M. Philip left for Torgau yesterday. The Prince wishes to send him to the Regensburg Conference, from which I have tried to dissuade him with all my might, as Philip is too ill to be sent on such a

useless errand, where we shall only be made a fool of, and time and money be wasted. They think we are asses who do not understand their coarse jokes, which is only less foolish than the laughable wisdom of the Meissen folk. Farewell in the Lord. MARTIN LUTHER.

(Walch, 21. 1560.)

CCCCXCIV

TO JACOB PROBST, PREACHER IN BREMEN

On this day Luther preached for the last time in Wittenberg, warning the people against the lovely syren, the devil's bride, Reason (*Vernunft*).

January 17, 1546.

Grace and peace ! I, old, weary, lazy, worn-out, cold, chilly, and, over and above, one-eyed man, now write you. And when I flattered myself that, half-dead as I am, I might be left in peace, it looks as if I had neither written nor done anything heretofore, so overburdened am I now with writing and talking. But Christ, who is all in all, is almighty, to whom be praise to all eternity. Amen.

I am delighted with what you tell me about the impertinent and bold way the Swiss write about me, condemning me as the most miserable slave of reason. For this is exactly what I wished when I wrote the pamphlet which has so enraged them—that they should openly avow themselves my enemies. I have achieved this, and, as I say, I am glad. I, the most despicable of men, am more than satisfied to be a partaker of the blessedness of the Psalm, "Blessed is the man who does not wander in the counsel of the Sacramentarians, nor standeth in the way of the Zwinglians, nor sitteth where the Zurich people sit." You now have my opinion. You beseech me to pray for you, which I do, and I also ask you to do the same for me ; and, as I have no doubt of the efficacy of your petitions, I am convinced you have as little of mine, and if I depart before you, which I desire, I shall draw you after me. And if you pass away before me, then you will do the same for me. For we believe in one God, and wait with all the saints for our Saviour's appearing.

I intend, God helping me, to write against the Louvain people. For I am more indignant at the senseless asses than it is seemly for such a theologian as I am to be, and an old man to boot. Nevertheless, Satan's partisans must be encountered, even should I expend my last breath upon them. Farewell, and remember that you are not only one of my oldest and best friends, but that I love you for Christ's sake, whom we both teach and love. Amen.

We are sinners, but He is our righteousness, who lives to all eternity. Amen. We all greet you and yours with much respect.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXCV

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

Luther arrived in Halle on the 25th with his three sons, their tutor, and a servant. He preached there next day on St. Paul's conversion.

January 25, 1546.

To my kind and dear Käthie Luther at Wittenberg. Grace and peace in the Lord, dear Käthie! We reached Halle to-day at eight o'clock, but could not go on to Eisleben; for, we encountered a great Anabaptist, with huge water-billows and great blocks of ice, covering the land, and threatening us with a rebaptism. Neither could we return on account of the Mulda; therefore we have to remain quietly at Halle between the two rivers. Not that we have any desire to drink the water, for we regale ourselves with good Torgau beer and Rhine wine, and let the Saale rage at its will. We did not risk embarking on the river, as we and our servants and the ferryman were much afraid, and we did not wish to tempt God. For the devil is enraged against us, and he dwells in the water floods; and it is better to evade him than afterwards to complain of him; besides, it is needless to delight the Pope and his emissaries through our death. I could not have believed the Saale could have made such a boiling

noise, bursting over the paved stones, etc. No more at present. Pray for us and be pious.

I believe, had you been here, you would have advised us to do exactly what we have done, and so for once we should have followed your counsel. I commend you to God. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXCVI

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

A jocular letter. On January 28 Luther left Halle, accompanied by Dr. Jonas. A stately cavalcade welcomed him into the Mansfeld land. He preached on Sunday, January 31, in Eisleben.

February 1, 1546.

To my dearly beloved housewife, Katherine Luther, owner of Zulsdorf and the Saßmarket, and whatever else she may be. Grace and peace in Christ, and my old, poor (and as I am aware), weak love to thee! Dear Käthie, I became extremely weak when I was close to Eisleben, but it was my own fault. However, hadst thou been there, thou wouldst have said that either the Jews or their God were at the bottom of it. For we had to pass through a village close to Eisleben where many Jews lived, and perhaps they blew upon me, for there is no doubt that at the village a strong wind blew in at the back of the carriage, penetrating through my doctor's hat, threatening to turn my brain into ice.

When the principal matters are arranged, I must endeavour to banish the Jews. Count Albrecht does not like them, and has tried to expose them, but as yet no one has meddled with them. If God will, I shall help Count Albrecht, and speak about them from this pulpit. I drink Naumburg beer, which you praised so highly at Mansfeld, and it agrees with me excellently.

Thy sons left Mansfeld the day before yesterday, as Hans von Jene seemed determined to have them with him. I do not know what they are about. If it is cold they may

help us. But now that it is mild they must do or suffer what they will. I herewith commend you and all at home to God, and greet all the boarders. *Vigilia purificationis.*

MARTIN LUTHER, THY OLD LOVER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXCVII

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

On the same day Luther wrote to Melanchthon, who was left at home because of his health. About riches being called thorns.

February 6, 1546.

To the deeply learned lady, Katherine Luther, my gracious consort at Wittenberg, grace and peace! Dear Käthie—We sit here in martyrdom, longing to be away, but I fancy that cannot be for eight days. Ask M. Philip to correct his exposition, for he does not seem to understand why the Lord calls riches thorns. This is the school in which to learn that. But it is disagreeable to me that the thorns should always be threatened with fire in the Scriptures; therefore I should be the more patient in order, with God's help, to be able to achieve something good. Thy sons are still at Mansfeld. We have enough to eat and drink, and would otherwise have a very good time if this troublesome business were only at an end. It seems as if the devil were mocking us, but God will requite him with the same. Amen. Pray for us. The messenger is impatient.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXCVIII

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

Luther jokes over his wife's anxiety about him.

February 7, 1546.

To my dear wife, Katherine Luther, doctress and self-tormentor at Wittenberg, my gracious lady. Grace and peace in the Lord!

Do thou read, dear Käthie, the Gospel of St. John

and the little catechism of which you once said, "This book tells all about me"? For thou must needs assume the cares of thy God, as if He were not Almighty, and could not create ten Dr. Martins if the old one were suffocated in the Saale or in the stove, or . . . Leave me in peace with thy cares! I have a better Protector than thou and all the angels. He it is who lay in the manger and was fondled on a maiden's breast, but was at the same time seated on the right hand of God, the Almighty Father. Therefore be at rest. Amen! I think that hell and the whole world must at present be free from devils, who, perhaps because of me, have all now gathered in Eisleben, to such a pass things seem to have come here. It is said that at Ritzdorf, close to Eisleben, where the wind blew so fiercely upon me, four hundred Jews walk and ride out and in. Count Albrecht, who owns all the land round Eisleben, has refused his protection to the Jews. There are often as many as fifty in one house here, as I wrote to you. Still no one will injure them. The Countess of Mansfeld, widow of Solms, is looked upon as their protector. I do not know if all this be true, but I have given my opinion pretty freely on the subject to-day, whether it will help or not. Pray, pray, pray, and thus help us to right matters. To-day I felt inclined to mount my carriage and set off, but my anxiety as to my Fatherland held me back. I have now become a lawyer (*jurist*), but that will lead to nothing. It would have been better had they allowed me to remain a divine. If spared, I should like to appear among them as a hobgoblin, so that I, through the grace of God, might set bounds to their pride. They try to pose as God, but they would be wise to retreat in time before their Godhead is changed into a devil, as happened to Lucifer, who could not remain in heaven on account of his pride. Well, well, the will of the Lord be done! Let M. Philip read this letter, for I have not time to write to him, so you may comfort yourself that I love you dearly, since, as you know, I always write when I can, and he will understand this, having a wife himself.

We live well here, and the Council sends me for

every meal about a hogshead of good Rhine wine. Sometimes I drink it with my friends. The Naumburg beer is also very good. The devil has ruined all the beer in the land with pitch, which causes the phlegm to accumulate in my breast, and with you he has destroyed the wine with brimstone. But here the wine is pure, except what is made in the district. And know that all the letters thou hast written have arrived, and to-day I have received those you wrote last Friday along with M. Philip's, so that you may not be angry. Thy beloved lord,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

CCCCXCIX

TO KATHERINE, LUTHER'S WIFE

Luther again teases his wife as to her useless worrying over him, and the narrow escape they had made. He says that he is well, but longs to return.

February 10, 1546.

To the saintly, anxious lady, Katherine Luther, owner of Zulsdorf, at Wittenberg, my gracious dear wife. Grace and peace in Christ! Most saintly lady doctress, we thank you kindly for your great care for us, which prevented you sleeping, for since you began to be so anxious we were nearly consumed by a fire in our inn just outside my room door; and yesterday, doubtless on account of your anxiety, a stone fell upon our heads and almost crushed us as in a mouse-trap; and over and above, in our own private room, lime and mortar came down for two days, and when the masons came—after only touching the stone with two fingers—it fell, and was as large as a large pillow, and two hand-breadths wide. We had to thank your anxious care for all this, but happily the dear, holy angels guarded us also. I fear if you do not cease being anxious, the earth may at last swallow us up and the elements pursue us. Is it thus thou hast learnt the catechism and the Faith? Pray and leave it to God to care for us, as He has promised in the 55th Psalm and many other places, “Cast thy burden on the

Lord, and He shall sustain thee." Thank God we are fresh and well, except that we are getting tired of the whole business, and nothing would satisfy Dr. Jonas but to have a sore leg also, having knocked it against a chest ; so great is the power of human envy, that he would not permit me to be the sole possessor of a lame leg. I herewith commit you to God. We would gladly be free and set out on our homeward journey, if God permitted it. Amen. Amen. Amen. Your obedient servant,

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

D

TO LUTHER'S WIFE, KATHERINE

Luther's last letter to his wife is preserved in the room in which he died in Eisleben. He preached for the last time on Matthew xi. 25, exhorting the people to cleave to the Lord and Master, who calls the weak and weary to Himself ; "I could say much more, but am weak, so will leave it alone," he concluded. Luther died on February 18.

February 14, 1546.

To my dear, kind wife, Katherine Luther, at Wittenberg. Grace and peace in the Lord ! Dear Käthie—We hope to return home this week, if God will. God has richly manifested His grace towards us here, for the lords, through their Council, have arranged everything, except two or three things, one of which is that the two brothers, Counts Gebhardt and Albrecht, should again become brothers, which I shall try to accomplish to-day, through inviting them to be my guests—so that they may converse with one another, for till now they have been dumb, embittering each other with letters.

In other respects the young gentlemen have been very happy, riding out together on sledges with the tingling of fools' bells, the young ladies accompanying them, all joking and in high spirits, Count Gebhardt's son being among the number.

From this one may see that God is the hearer of prayer.

I send you some trout, which the Countess Albrecht has sent me. She is delighted with the reconciliation.

Thy sons are still at Mansfeld. Jacob Luther will see well to them. We are provided with meat and drink like lords, and have every attention paid us—indeed too much, so that we might forget you at Wittenberg. I am very well.

But Dr. Jonas's leg has been very bad, holes appearing in the skin, but God will help. You may show this to Magister Philip, Dr. Pommer, and Dr. Cruciger! It is reported here that Dr. Martin has been snatched away by the devil. The report comes from Leipsic and Magdeburg. It is the invention of these wiseacres, your countrymen.

Some declare that the Emperor is thirty miles from here, at Soest in Westphalia; others that the French are enlisting recruits, and the Landgrave also.

But let us say and sing, that we shall wait and see what God will do. I commend you to God.

MARTIN LUTHER.

(De Wette.)

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